

THE INDEPENDENT

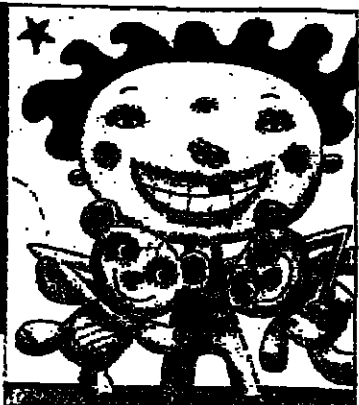
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SATURDAY 14 JUNE 1997

WEATHER: Sunshine and showers

(RSP) 60p

SPARE BEAR
Children's
Story of
the Year
Magazine



MEL SMITH
Young and
trendy. Not
The eye



GOLF OFFER 2 FOR 1 GREEN FEES

Starting today See the long weekend, page 18

Tory left prepares to leave

Clarke delivers ultimatum



Moderate MPs plan
staged breakaway

'Good riddance' says right

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

The long-running threat of a Tory split, described by moderate MPs as "staged separation", hardened considerably last night after Kenneth Clarke warned he could not serve as a member of William Hague's shadow cabinet.

Under outline plans, the split would start with recurrent revolt against a Euro-sceptic whip, followed by resignation from the party whip, and an eventual alliance with Paddy Ashdown's Liberal Democrats on the Opposition benches in the Commons.

The threat from Mr Clarke and his moderate Tory colleagues last night brought instant denunciation from the Tory right, with a senior figure saying: "We will not be subject to threats of blackmail. If they want to go, good riddance."

On the other side of the deepening Tory divide, one MP told *The Independent* that up to a dozen Conservative MPs would eventually be prepared to resign the party whip in the Commons if the new leadership froze out pro-European Tories.

"We are beginning the scenario where we separate by stages," he warned. "Rather than trying to bring us in, in a sense they're forcing us out."

That was the message also delivered by Mr Clarke himself last night, when he warned of the threat posed by Mr Hague's efforts to "steamroller" through views that were hostile to Europe.

Earlier, the Clarke camp had circulated a letter sent by Mr Hague to Euro MP Caroline Jackson, in which he ruled out membership of the single currency, under his leadership of the party, for another decade at least. In a calculated rebuff to Mr Clarke

- who could not stomach such a repudiation of the carefully-sculpted "wait-and-see" policy on which the Tories fought the recent election - Mr Hague added: "If I were elected leader of the Conservative Party, I would certainly expect every shadow minister to support this policy."

Pointing to the wording of that letter, one Clarke team member said: "Ken could not serve on those terms."

It is also unlikely that Michael Heseltine or any other pro-European MP could join Mr Hague's team on such terms of abject and unconditional surrender.

Mr Clarke said in a speech to the West Oxfordshire Conservative Association, in Witney, last night: "The person elected next week simply will not have a detailed mandate to impose a series of immediate changes to Conservative Party policy on specific issues."

Nevertheless, he said that both Mr Hague and John Redwood were attempting to claim that they had the power to lock the party into a policy of single-currency rejection.

But the former chancellor of the Exchequer warned: "Attempts to bind the party in advance to hardline positions which are designed to exclude other arguments on the subject will divide and damage us."

That statement hardened the warning issued by Mr Clarke on Thursday night, when he said: "We divide the party as deciding the key issues before the process [of policy review] has even started."

One of Mr Clarke's Commons backers said last night that the party was now facing the real prospect of "staged separation", with a group of up to a dozen pro-Europeans initially defying

the party whip and then, if no reconciliation took place, resigning the whip. "That would be the next stage," the MP said. "Then of course the next stage after that is that you would automatically go into voting alliances with people. We would be sitting with the Liberals, and you'll take it from there."

The MP said a lot would depend on the lead that might be given by Mr Clarke. "If Ken can take it, or find a way through, then the rest of us would be inclined to follow him. But they're making it impossible for him."

That difficulty was robustly put by Mr Clarke in his speech last night, when he said: "My kind of Conservative Party will be a party of all the people, seeking to broaden its appeal, not narrow it."

"If I am elected next week, I will make inclusivity and the search for unity the central hallmark of my leadership of the party. I want us to find a way through the ideological battles that cost us dear in recent years and to unite around the area of maximum agreement."

"We must stress what unites us, to focus our fire on the economy, where Labour will be weak, and to find a way of living together on Europe, rather than steamroller through particular views. My shadow team will be a wide one, representing all strands of Conservative thinking."

"This leadership contest is not - and must not be - about setting straightaway in concrete the policy positions of the Conservative Party for the next five years."

Unfortunately for Mr Clarke, that has already happened, with Mr Hague and Mr Redwood competing for the right-wing vote, with a considerable hardening of Mr Hague's position on the single currency over the last week.



Kenneth Clarke: 'Attempts to bind the party to hardline positions will divide and damage us'

Photograph: Adrian Dennis

If - as seems certain now - Mr Hague goes through to the leadership next Tuesday or Thursday, the parliamentary party will have slammed the door on Mr Clarke.

The question that would then remain open, if Mr Clarke went on to the back benches, is whether he would use the existing framework of moderate Tory organisation to lead a withdrawal - as Shirley Williams, David Owen

and William Rodgers with the Social Democrats in 1981.

One of Mr Clarke's Commons allies said last night: "We've already got the Mainstream-Macleod Group operation. It's all staffed and got an office, and there's the Tory Reform Group with branches all over the country. There's quite a substantial part of the party inside and outside of Parliament."

Shock jock wins battle of motormouths



Howard Stern: Top shock jock

Photograph: Adrian Dennis

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

Howard Stern, the American shock-jock DJ, won the second round of a battle of motor mouths with Chris Evans last night when he appeared on Evans' Channel 4 chatshow *ITV Friday*.

Mr Stern, whose trademark is offensive humour, explained on the show how he had met Mr Evans' ex-wife and planned to bring her with him to the interview and make love to her in front of the ginger-haired millionaire.

"She's spruced herself up since she left you. I said to her I'll make love to you on my lap while Chris watches. There is nothing worse than watching a man, especially a big ugly American like myself, fondle your ex-wife."

He also lambasted Mr Evans for dumping his wife once he got famous - saying Mr Evans could never have got a woman before he became famous.

When he wasn't discussing the former Mrs Evans attributes Mr Stern, whose American radio show is full of his racism, sexism and homophobia, repeatedly devoted his attention to a black woman in the *ITV Friday* audience. "I've never had a

black woman before," he said. "That black woman is mine."

Mr Stern shut up Mr Evans when he appeared on Stern's radio show two weeks ago and Mr Stern told him he was "a nothing" and to "shut up, you're boring me."

However Evans tried to get his own back with a vox pop in the streets that showed how few people had heard of Mr Stern compared with Mr Evans. Even an American claimed not to know Mr Stern.

However Mr Stern was low key in comparison to his outbursts on his own radio show against blacks, gays, women, Jews - he's Jewish himself - and anything else he comes across.

Mr Stern, 43, is in the UK to promote the film of his life story, *Private Parts*. He leapt to national prominence in the US in 1982 after a Miami-bound jet flew into the Potomac river in Washington DC killing 78 passengers. Live on air the next day Mr Stern called the airline and tried to book a one-way ticket to the Potomac Bridge. When told the airline didn't fly to the Potomac Bridge Stern replied: "Well you did yesterday!"

That stunt got him dropped from his Washington station DC101, but he was quickly snapped up on a bigger

salary by a New York station.

His humour is based on an obscenely crudeness about sex that titillates ordinary puritanical Americans and has earned him millions of dollars of fines. It has also earned him a reputed \$8m a year.

Regular routines in his radio show include getting porn actresses and prostitutes to strip off and bemoaning the inadequate size of his penis. He once joked about his wife's miscarriage, saying that he had photographed it so his parents could have a photograph of their grandchild.

While *Private Parts* portrays Mr Stern as an underdog struggling to get his innovative and challenging humour past uncomprehending bosses and bureaucrats in fact his career is based on flashes of occasional brilliance, suffocated by sub-Benny Hill-style pandering to the prejudices of a male, lower-middle class audience worried that it is being overtaken by ethnic minorities and women.

Being American Mr Stern doesn't claim he is being ironic, although his lifestyle is very different from that claimed by his on air persona. He claims to have been faithful to his wife of 19 years and interviewers report that his 6'5" frame, sunglasses and glam-rock hair hides an intelligent and thoughtful man.

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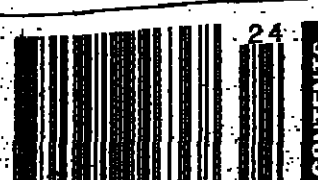


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Courage rewarded
Lisa Potts, Philip Lawrence and three teachers from Dunblane Primary School are commended for outstanding courage in today's Queen's Birthday Honours List.
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news

significant shorts

Whitehall seeks to reinstate ban on prisoners' press

The Government is seeking to overturn a landmark free-speech ruling and reinstate a blanket ban on journalists interviewing prison inmates who try to protest their innocence through the press.

Two prisoners, Ian Simms and Michael O'Brien, serving life sentences for murders they say they never committed, successfully challenged the ban in a test case last year, in which Mr Justice Latham said prison governors were violating inmates' freedom of speech by a restriction barring discussions with visiting journalists unless the writer undertook not to use the material obtained.

Simms, whose appeal failed in 1990, had been receiving visits from Bob Woffinden, a former Yorkshire TV documentary maker and author of the book *Miscarriages of Justice*. The governor of Full Sutton prison demanded the undertaking following reports that the mother of the murder victim, Helen McCourt, had been distressed by an article in a national newspaper. A similar undertaking was required by the governor of Long Lartin jail, following visits to O'Brien by Karen Voisey, a BBC Wales journalist.

The judge gave former home secretary Michael Howard leave to appeal, but free speech campaigners had expected his successor Jack Straw to drop any further challenge in the light of the Government's commitment to openness, and its pledge to make the European Convention on Human Rights part of UK law. Patricia Wynn Davies

Water compensation may dry up

Consumers who fail to get water in a drought may not be compensated by their supplier company, despite government pleas for a better service, it emerged yesterday.

Pamela Taylor, chief executive of the Water Companies Association, which represents 20 of the smaller privatised firms, fired a warning shot at the Government as companies raced to meet the midnight deadline set by John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, to cut leaks and help protect the environment. Britain's 29 privatised water companies have been under attack from Labour for big profits and poor service over the past two years. Mr Prescott demanded a shake-up at a water summit on 19 May, giving firms three weeks to come up with ideas for improving services. Ms Taylor called for more talks with the Government, saying in a statement, "some companies simply cannot commit to a guarantee of this kind due to the resources available to them in terms of their geographical location".

Fab four-wheels up for sale



Ringo Starr's once-favourite sports car is to go under the hammer, it was announced yesterday.

The Mercedes-Benz 190 SL owned by the Beatles drummer when fans were singing the immortal line "baby you can drive my car", is expected to fetch up to £30,000. Starr bought the 12-year-old car in 1972 from the original owner in Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire. His name appears in the log book, along with his signature. In 1987 he sold the two-seater roadster to Hans Duemke, an engineer who trained with Mercedes in Stuttgart. Mr Duemke, from Cobham, Surrey, is putting the car up for sale through Brooks Auctioneers at the Goodwood Festival of Speed in Sussex on 20 June, after gradually restoring it "as a labour of love".

Train strikes set to continue

Industrial action which yesterday caused the cancellation of a fifth of trains on one of the busiest rail networks in Britain is expected to lead to worse disruption today and to continue into next week.

Talks aimed at settling the dispute at Connex South Central, which operates trains into London Bridge and Victoria from Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire, broke up last night and are not due to resume until Monday. Connex said that around three out of 10 trains would be cancelled today, but the company hoped to run a full service on Sunday except for special trains laid on for the London to Brighton bicycle race. Aslef members at Connex South Central have thrown out company proposals on working practices and union representatives are seeking to renegotiate. Barrie Clement

Boy injured under wheels of bus

A boy was seriously injured when he tried to get off his school bus before it had stopped, police confirmed yesterday. Scott Runcie was travelling to Greenock Academy, Strathclyde, with his schoolfriends when he tried to get off the bus before it had properly come to a halt. The 12-year-old fell under the wheels of the single decker bus and suffered leg injuries. He was taken to Inverclyde Royal hospital where he is said to be in a serious condition. The 56-year-old driver of the bus was also taken to hospital suffering from shock.

Priest's attacker sent to secure unit

A French student obsessed with religion was sent to a secure psychiatric unit indefinitely yesterday for stabbing a Roman Catholic priest in the back after the cleric had helped him.

Father Edward Carroll, 65, "miraculously" escaped death when the knife went within a centimetre of his heart's main artery, the Old Bailey was told. "If anyone deserved divine intervention, it was this good man," said Helena Kennedy, QC, for the defence. Nicholas Top, 27, from Holloway, north London admitted wounding Father Carroll in February last year at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Islington, north London.

people



Camilla Parker Bowles: On her way to Highgrove at time of accident (Photograph: PA)

Police launch investigation into Parker Bowles crash

Police disclosed yesterday that they were investigating the precise circumstances of the car crash in Wiltshire on Wednesday night involving Camilla Parker Bowles, the close friend of the Prince of Wales.

Prince Charles's swift action in sending his protection officer to rescue Mrs Parker Bowles, and giving his aides permission to tell the press her side of the story, have led to tabloid reports of a hitherto unseen public acknowledgement of the pair's relationship. Mrs Parker Bowles was apparently driving towards Highgrove, the Prince's home, when the crash occurred.

As Carolyn Melville-Smith, the other driver involved in the crash, publicly criticised Mrs Parker Bowles's disappearance from the scene immediately afterwards, a senior royal source was busy putting across Prince Charles's mistress's side of the story.

"What Miss Melville-Smith actually saw was Mrs Parker Bowles running back to her car to get her mobile phone to summon help," said the senior royal source. "Because of the geography she couldn't see another car."

Mrs Parker Bowles is believed to have been obeying security instructions that she should immediately

leave the scene of an accident because of the possibility that it was a front for a terrorist attack.

But Miss Melville-Smith, 53, of Easton Grey in Wiltshire, whose Volvo estate car overturned in the accident, leaving her trapped by her skirt, which was caught in the car door, was having none of it. "You should never leave the scene of an accident. If I had done it, I would be in a lot of trouble right now."

Mrs Parker Bowles had been heading for Prince Charles's Highgrove estate when the collision occurred on a narrow country road eight miles from the estate.

After calling the emergency services, she called Prince Charles, who immediately sent one of his royal protection officers to rescue her.

Asked if Mrs Parker Bowles could be prosecuted for leaving the scene, a police spokesman said: "It will depend on the exact circumstances. That is one of a number of things that will be fully investigated."

Under the Road Traffic Act 1988, it is illegal to fail to report an accident or leave the scene without swapping addresses with anyone else involved. The maximum penalty is six months in prison and/or a fine and between five and 10 penalty points. Clare Garner

Bullimore plans second solo voyage

Yachtsman Tony Bullimore (right) yesterday announced he was planning another solo bid to sail round the world.

The British sailor, who spent nearly five days trapped in the hull of his overturned yacht in the Southern Ocean earlier this year, said he had made the decision while competing in the Round Europe Race.

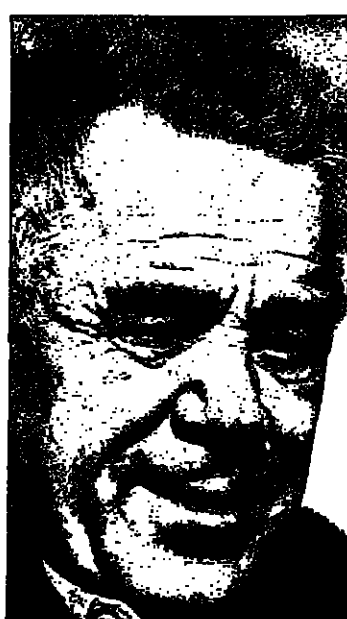
Returning to the sea had left him feeling exhilarated once again, he said from the German city of Kiel, after the competition's third stage.

"It has been really good fun. I have a crew of five so I am not on my own and we are doing very well in the race," he added.

Mr Bullimore's yacht, *Exide Challenger* came in fourth in the monohull category in the last stage from Arendal in Norway, giving the crew an overall placing of fifth out of seven boats.

The race is the first time the 58-year-old Birmingham businessman has put to sea since his televised ordeal in the Vendée Globe round-the-world race in January.

Mr Bullimore was eventually rescued by an Australian frigate after surviving in an air-pocket in his



capsized hull, braving bitter temperatures and losing one of his little fingers while shutting a hatch.

Mr Bullimore said he intended to take part in the Round Alone race, a solo round-the-world competition due to start in autumn next year.

"I have decided to go round the world again. I was thinking about it before but did not want to make up my mind until I put to sea again."

"But it has all gone so well that I think will definitely do it," he added.

Thai return after drugs ordeal

A British grandmother who claims Thai police viciously beat her and swindled her family out of more than £5,000, after she was seized on trumped-up drugs charges, is set to return to the scene of her holiday nightmare as a guest of the Thai authorities.

Shirlee Cook, 55, and her husband, Brian, will fly out from Heathrow on Monday, on a 12-day all-expenses-paid trip to Bangkok, Ayutthaya and Chiang Mai - courtesy of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

Mrs Cook said: "The invitation came out of the blue. They knew of what had happened to us and were upset about our experience. They were keen to help us to see the nicer side of Thailand."

"It's a marvellous gesture and although my husband and I are a little on edge about going back, I'm sure it will be fantastic."

However, the Thai government has never accepted Mrs Cook's accusations that she was convicted by a kangaroo court and forced to pay thousands of pounds to ensure her release in Patong in November 1995.

A spokeswoman for the Tourism Authority of Thailand said: "The reason for the holiday is to show the Cooks that the experience they had was not the real Thailand."

James Mellor

briefing

SOCIETY

One in five infertile people contemplates suicide

One in five infertile men and women has contemplated suicide whilst waiting for or undergoing treatment which could give them a baby, according to a survey.

Depression, isolation and frustration affect more than nine out of 10 people, said the National Infertility Awareness Campaign, which surveyed nearly 1000 people. One in three said their relationship with their partner had weakened as a result of their failure to conceive.

Adding to the pressure of trying to have a baby was the fact that 75 per cent of the respondents had to pay for some or all of the treatment they received, NIAC said. Almost three-quarters had already spent between £1,000 and £4,000 on treatment and in some areas this exceeded £12,000.

"Although infertility is recognised by the World Health Organisation as a medical condition, very few people are aware that it causes emotional distress and depression, like other illnesses," said NIAC president Clare Brown. Glenda Cooper

DRUGS

Ecstasy users' crash-landing

Weekend clubbers who use ecstasy in preference to alcohol should be prepared to hit a low in the middle of the following week, researchers say.

A study of two groups of club-goers who went out on a Saturday night and whose mood was assessed several days later found those who took the drug were more depressed and had poorer concentration than those who drank alcohol. Some of the ecstasy users had clinical depression.

The researchers, from the department of clinical health psychology at the University of London, say the depression could be a rebound effect, as levels of the brain chemical, serotonin, fall after being sharply raised by the drug. However, they warn that it may also result from damage to the nerve-endings where serotonin is produced, in which case "there is a possibility that complete mood recovery may not occur." Jeremy Laurance



MEDICINE

Melanoma vaccines tested

Scientists worldwide are testing a wide range of potential vaccines to counter melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer that claims thousands of lives each year. Promising early results were reported at the fourth World Conference on Melanoma in Sydney this week, although researchers warned the technology was still in its early stages.

Vaccines are the hope of the future for the prevention of recurrence of melanoma, said Professor William McCarthy of Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

More than 90,000 new cases of melanoma are reported around the world each year, about 6,000 in Australia, which has the highest incidence of the lifestyle-related disease.

The traditional treatment is to remove tumours by surgery, but the new hope is to combine surgery with a therapeutic vaccine, manufactured from the tumorous cells, to boost the body's immune system and help it attack the disease.

Vaccine trials are focussing on patients with a 50 per cent risk of recurrence. Early results reported to the conference found patients, given the vaccine lived 17 per cent longer than those who had surgery only, although the trial is not yet complete.

POLITICS

Scots Tories to debate devolution

The Scottish Conservatives yesterday announced that the agenda for their party conference on 27 June. The former Secretary of State for Scotland and MP for Stirling, Michael Forsyth, will address the meeting, which has been cut down to take place on a single day.

Only two items will be debated - the devolution referendum and whether to break free from the English Conservative Party.

Annabel Goldie, the chairman of the Scottish party, told *The Independent* last week that nothing was ruled out, including independence from Tory HQ in London and adopting a new name, possibly the Scottish Unionist Party.

Conveniently for leaders wanting to avoid too much blood-letting, the agenda contains no resolutions for the debate on party structure. It is billed simply as a "forum" for members' views.

However, there is a trenchant resolution for the debate on devolution. Put down by former MP Phil Gallie, who lost his Ayr seat at the election, it commits the party to campaign against home rule in the referendum next September. But Tories from the Reform Group wing in Scotland believe it is time to appear positive about an Edinburgh Parliament and use it as a political springboard. Stephen Goodwin

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Co-op places ban on alcopops

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

The "alcopop" bubble could be on its way to bursting after the Co-op yesterday became the first major supermarket group to ban the sale of the controversial alcoholic soft drinks. The company said it would remove the drinks from the shelves on Monday.

Calling on other stores to follow suit, the Co-op said it had made the decision following growing concern over the

popularity of alcopops among under-age drinkers.

The Co-op said: "As a responsible retailer, we feel the time has come to act. We believe these drinks are designed specifically to appeal to young people and are, in fact, consumed by under-18s who cannot legally buy them."

More than 18 brands will be moved from the shelves of the Co-operative Retail group's 1,200 licensed stores. They include brands such as Hooper's Hooch, Two Dogs, Shotts

Lemon Jag and Stunn Black-currant Blitz.

The move comes a day after the Health Secretary Frank Dobson said manufacturers of the drinks were "a disgrace" and threatened a blanket ban. He accused the manufacturers of deliberately trying "to get children hooked on booze".

Other retailers were considering their position yesterday. Sainsbury's said it had no immediate plans to stop selling the drinks. However, it said that it had decided two weeks ago to

phase out its own alcoholic lemon drink.

The Co-op's decision was welcomed by Alcohol Concern, which has called for tougher controls on the sale of the drinks. "It is not the kind of action they will have taken lightly and if a proper system of regulation was in place they wouldn't have to do it."

Drinks companies which distribute alcopops defended their products and said the Co-op action did not mean the beginning of the end of alcopops.

Alcopop producers admitted that Co-op's decision could produce a domino effect which would see all the major supermarkets banning the products. But they said under-age drinking would not go away just because of ban.

The Portman group, the watchdog set up by the drinks industry said the Co-op had gone further than it was looking for.

Alcopops have proved hugely successful since they were first introduced into Britain two

years ago. The market is worth around £250-300m a year and though sales growth has slowed manufacturers are still introducing new brands.

The Government has taken a tough stance on the drinks. The duty on the drinks was increased by 40 per cent in the last budget. Last month, the new government announced an "urgent" investigation in to the sale of alcopops as a new survey revealed that six out of 10 children drunk them. A judge had condemned the drinks the previous

day after hearing that a 14-year-old got drunk on alcoholic lemonade and died and burned down a school.

There was an outcry in April following the launch of alcoholic milk drinks with names such as Moo and Super Milk.

The Co-op has often adopted an ethical stance on consumer issues and the Co-op Bank has built its reputation on its ethical trading position. Last month the bank said responsible retailers would stop selling cigarettes in the 21st century.

What happened when the Muppets tried to bring peace to the Middle East



The great divide down Sesame Street

Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

The peace process has been complex amongst humans in the Middle East. But then wait until you try to involve Muppets.

Children's Television Workshop, the group which makes the children's programme Sesame Street, is producing their seventeenth foreign version of the programme. But the Israeli-Palestinian version, due on screen by the end of the year, is the first time that former enemies have been united to work together.

Sesame Street is the wildly popular American show which as well as teaching the children the rudiments of reading and maths, preached love, tolerance and not being nasty to people who are different. It brought to

life Big Bird, the Cookie Monster, Oscar the Grouch and the duo Ernie and Bert beloved of children ever since.

Each foreign version has its own idiosyncrasies - it is said that the Russians came up with plot lines which would have not been out of place in a Tolstoy novel and the French insisted on giving Big Bird a facelift so he looked like Charles de Gaulle.

But in the Middle East there have been difficulties from the start, with the Israeli and Palestinian Muppets even having to live on separate Sesame Streets. If you're Israeli, look out for Rehov Sumsum - a street with an ice-cream parlour and a view of the Mediterranean. If you're Palestinian there is Shariye Sumsum with a well, a shop selling Arab sweets and a backdrop of the West Bank.

Lewis Bernstein, the executive producer, said: "Both sides felt fairly strongly that they had two independent lives that would interact every now and then. But for them to be singing and dancing together - that would be so far from reality that it would become unbelievable, even for Sesame Street."

The Americans then suggested a compromise - a park where Muppets from both sides could play together. The Israelis agreed. The Palestinians wanted to know who owned the park. "While the Palestinians thought it was a good idea, they felt it was unrealistic," added Mr Bernstein. "There is no such thing as neutral territory there. It was too sensitive an issue."

To combat the language barrier, the producers are trying to use a core of

3,000 words that are similar in both Hebrew and Arabic. In one case, however, the Palestinians wanted one of their characters to say that he learned Hebrew while in an Israeli jail. Mr Bernstein said: "We said it wasn't necessarily the message we wanted to get across."

But real life has a nasty habit of intruding - once, just before shooting a scene in which Palestinian and Israeli Muppets meet, a Tel Aviv cafe was blown up. The crews were asked if they wanted to continue with the production. "Both teams wanted to do it despite the violence," said Mr Bernstein. In the end the Palestinian crews were booked into Tel Aviv hotels whereas, ironically the Israeli crew had far more difficulty getting to the studio because of the roadblocks. Each side has its own crew, writes

its own scripts and looks at the other's. But all the Muppets are united in their loathing of onions which are served to them: Mr Bernstein said: "The symbolism for those watching is that is that we all have our fears but above all we are children who can get along if we throw off our parents' hang ups."

The Israeli-Palestinian version is not the only one to address social issues. The street itself is adapted to reflect whatever country it is in - in Norway it becomes a train station because children do not play out in the street, in Mexico it is a plaza, in Canada a national park.

The Turkish version focuses heavily on health and hygiene issues because of the high infant mortality rate whereas the Kuwait version praises manual labour as producers were worried

that children brought up after the discovery of oil would be cocooned in a wealthy environment.

The next production planned is a post-apartheid version for South Africa. Cooper Wright, project director for South Africa, said it had to become a multi-media project including radio and community outreach because of low levels of television ownership amongst blacks.

Mr Bernstein is confident that the Israeli-Palestinian version will succeed and help children learn tolerance. But the two sides are not above taking an affectionate swipe at each other.

The Israeli version of the grumpy Oscar the Grouch is Moishe Gofnik, who lives in a broken down car. The Palestinians however decided to dispense with Oscar as "an Israeli grinch was more than sufficient".



Muppet news: Palestinian and Israeli characters from the divided Sesame Street and, top left, from the united version shown in the UK

Mickey Mouse steals the soul of Gotham City

David Usborne
New York

The people of Manhattan are used to parades and the myriad disruptions they create, not least to traffic flow. If it is not President Clinton swanning through, it is a march for one of this city's ethnic communities - the Irish, say, or Puerto Ricans. Tonight though, the grid-

lock comes by courtesy of the mouse called Mickey.

No fewer than 30 city blocks will be closed off for most of today in preparation for a street extravaganza tonight that will be for the benefit this time of a corporation - Disney. To some, it is an event that will mark the final triumph by Mickey over Gotham's very soul.

The occasion is the opening

tonight of Disney's latest animation feature film, *Hercules*. Starting at 9.15 pm, the electric cavalcade which signals the end of the day in Disneyland and Disneyworld will wind its brightly-lit way from 42nd Street and north up 5th Avenue.

For maximum effect, Disney is also deploying 2,000 police officers to join the spectators in lining the route. Manhattan will not only be the most blind-

ed way and begged them to turn off all their office lights for the evening. The city has obliged too - as the floats pass by each block, street lights in the area will be automatically extinguished.

To allay security fears, the city is also deploying 2,000 police officers to join the spectators in lining the route. Manhattan will not only be the most blind-

ing place on the planet tonight it is also likely to be the safest.

This does not come free: Disney is contributing \$500,000 to New York to allay the cost of all these contingencies. The company is even providing additional barricades. Eight miles of them will be needed and the city does not have enough of its own.

Mickey's conquest of the Apple has been swift and over-

whelming. Disney has been the linchpin of the makeover of Times Square from a nexus of sleaze to a veritable symbol of family values. It has refurbished the historic Amsterdam Theatre on 42nd Street and opened a giant Disney store alongside it. And in 1995, it commandeered the Great Lawn in Central Park for the premiere of *Pocahontas*. For those who despair of

the incursion, tonight's show is the last straw. "It symbolises the triumph of a certain kind of bland suburban culture," remarked William Dobbs, a lawyer who has been trying to combat the wholesale ejection of the sex industry from Times Square. "This is yet another example of the government deciding what kind of culture New Yorkers should see."

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We've had Bambi and Tony the inspirational. Now meet the bloke next door

Jojo Moyes

The words were clearly marked in silver on the pedestal, in case anyone had forgotten: The Prime Minister. Apparently they came in handy.

"There is still a stage where I look around when they say Prime Minister to see who they're talking about," said Tony Blair, grinning as he stepped behind it. "But I'll get used to it."

We have seen many Tony Blairs since he took over leadership of the Labour Party, and subsequently the country: the short-lived Bambi, Tony the Ruthless, Tony the Inspirational. But yesterday the 130-strong audience in Worcester's Guildhall, venue for the first "People's Question and Answer" session, were treated to a different, modest Tony - Tony the Bloke Next Door.

Perhaps baffling an audience from one of the election's key marginals - C2 Worcester woman was fiercely courted by both sides - Tony sought to emphasise the point by stripping to his shirt and declining to sit down.

"It's a slightly different kind of question time to those in the House of Commons ... well, I hope so," he said.

He began with a short speech outlining the Government's new crime Bill which contained "new punishments" for young people who had committed anti-social crimes, including reparation orders for damage they may have caused.

The Government, to emphasise its determination to clean up the streets, had cleverly arranged for a mechanical road sweeper to drone noisily up and down outside the building, until the PM was forced briefly to break off and wait for it to pass.

Fresh from a walkabout on a council estate in Redditch, Mr Blair was keen to emphasise that he would be tough on the causes of crime - including "kids as young as 10 or 11".

"I think it's important that young people committing crimes realise that there is going to be a penalty that will follow as a result," he warned.

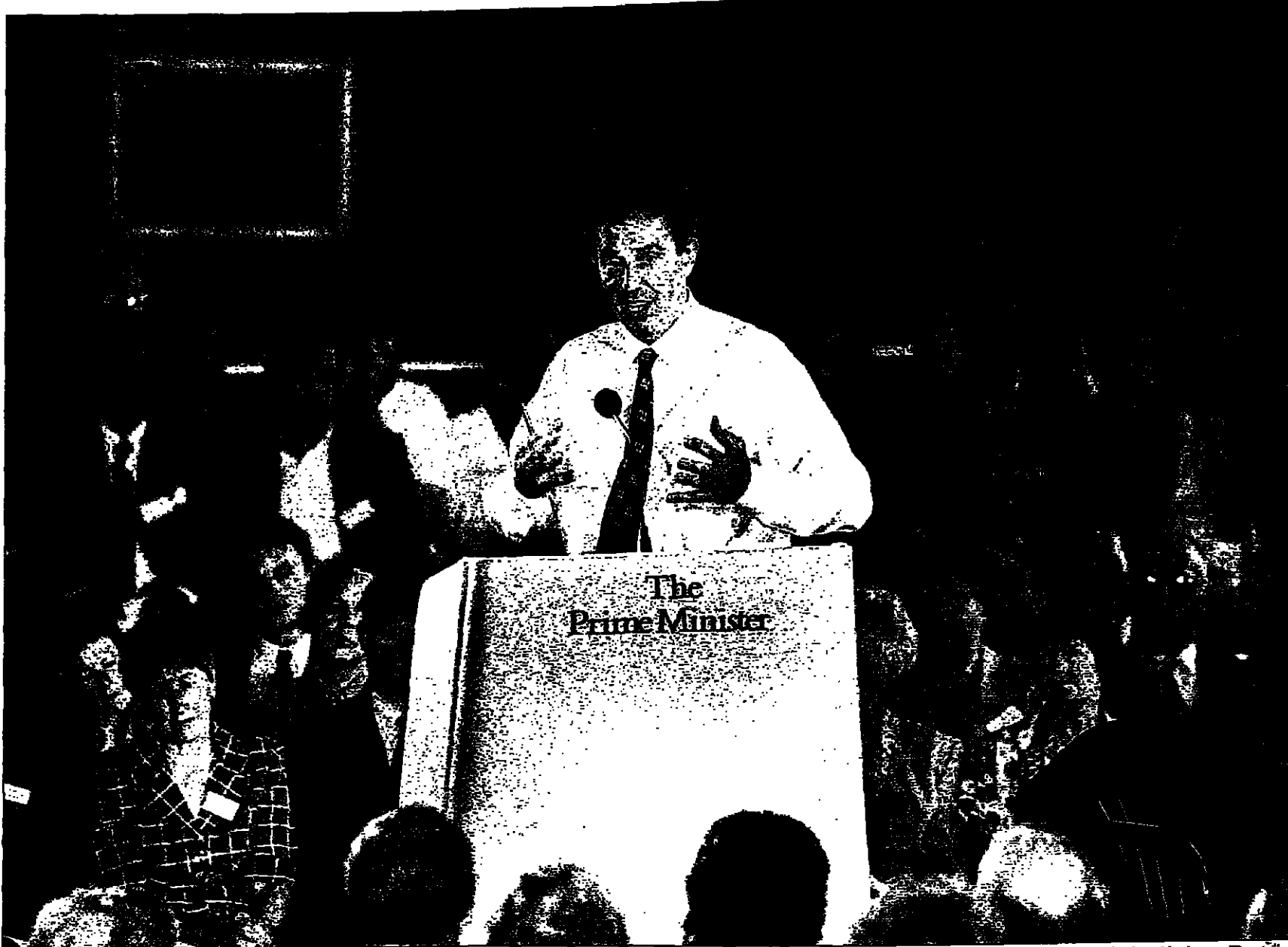
This meant no repeat cautioning. "It's not very different to how you try to bring up your own children. I'm not saying we're very good at that because we're probably not," he said modestly.

The audience, which comprised local residents, members of voluntary groups and criminal justice agencies, and pupils, were largely impressed, and fielded low-key, non-confrontational questions and waited patiently for the answers.

Compared to the election campaign, this must have seemed a doddle, and the Prime Minister graciously lobbed a few questions out to police officers for their views.

Occasionally he had to deflect a tricky one, such as whether the Government would extend the blasphemy laws to other religions.

And someone raised the unpleasant



Man of the people: Tony Blair answering some of the non-confrontational questions put to him in Worcester yesterday

Photograph: Ian Hodgson/Reuters

question of extra funding, which, as Mr Blair said, couldn't be addressed "or the Chancellor would be after him".

But there was a stern warning to the makers of "alcoops" - "a serious problem that we have to tackle", Jack Straw, he says, "would tackle it, and tackle it firmly".

In general, however, he sought to reaf-

firm his message that tackling crime had to be a matter for cooperation between agencies and society, and a balance between rights and responsibilities.

It would be wrong of him, he said, to promise any more. So he didn't. But the audience seemed impressed, even the young people who felt he had dwelt too

long on them as a source of crime. Such as the pupils of Worcester Sixth Form College.

"He seemed sincere, not like he was putting on an act," said Claire Maidment. "I think it's good he came here. We thought he'd go to a big city."

And an almost universally positive re-

sponse seemed to suggest that a Prime Minister can elicit a lot of goodwill by even appearing to take the electorate's views on board. Local tenant Barry Pederson agreed.

"The main thing is, I now know I've got a government that's going to listen to our views. I think he's absolutely genuine," he said.

Aitken judge warns over calling his wife as witness

Kim Sengupta

The judge hearing the Jonathan Aitken libel trial said yesterday that he would have to "reconsider his position" if his own wife and two social acquaintances are called as witnesses.

Lady Catherine Popplewell, the wife of Mr Justice Popplewell, was on the board of the Independent Broadcasting Authority from 1987-90. The two

acquaintances, John Whitney and Lord Thomson, were, respectively, director-general and chairman of the organisation.

They could be called to give evidence over Mr Aitken's involvement with TV-am. The former defence procurement minister and chief secretary to the Treasury has admitted during the hearing a "lack of candour" with the IBA over Saudi investment in the

breakfast television company. George Carman, QC, counsel for the *Guardian* and Granada Television, being sued by Mr Aitken over allegations that he was in the "pocket" of the Saudis, and pimped for them, told the judge that he did not foresee that Lady Popplewell would be called as a witness.

But he stressed that he could not give a "categorical undertaking" until all the documen-

tation has been considered. Mr Carman added: "You will accept that I am doing my best to try and obtain a concluding answer to that question as quickly as possible."

Mr Carman acknowledged that the judge had told counsel before the trial about his wife's membership of the IBA at the material time.

He added that if Lady Popplewell was called it would

clearly have "unfortunate consequences" in terms of the trial for all parties.

Mr Carman continued: "I hasten to add, respectfully, this is through no fault of your Lordship. I want to make it abundantly plain to the court that speaking for myself and my clients one has total confidence in your Lordship's integrity and impartiality."

He said that if he did not most respectfully say that I have some concerns which are shared by my clients of the public perception of the matter that justice must not only be done but be seen to be done."

Mr Justice Popplewell said that if it had occurred to him that his wife was likely to be interviewed by any of the parties, he would not have refused Mr Carman's application on Thurs-

day for a day's adjournment to consider what witnesses should be called following new evidence from the IBA.

The judge added: "I wouldn't have wanted to give any sort of appearance of seeking to prevent your client from taking a proof from my wife, or indeed in due course calling her, if she has anything material to say."

"If she has, I haven't the first idea as, properly, I have not dis-

cussed the matter with her. If it transpires that my wife is to be called as a witness, we'll have to reconsider my position."

The case continues.

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All-woman funeral directors cash in on a dead original concept



Tony Heath

First there were green burials for the environmentally sound departure - now there are all-women funeral directors.

Martha's Funerals - named after the sister of Lazarus, who Jesus is said to have brought back from the dead - based in the Malpas district of Newport, south Wales, is one of the latest of a handful already operating in Britain, and retains all the dignity of a profession traditionally the

preserve of black-suited men.

The three women who make up the team believe that, given the choice, many widowers prefer to entrust every stage of saying farewell to their loved ones to women. Lyn Teague, one of the partners, explains: "You have a married couple. They've been together for a long time. The wife passes away. She's never been touched by another man and he wants that to continue. We provide that continuity."

Mrs Teague, a 36-year-old mother of five, and her partners, Suzanne Nutt and Jan Barry, attend to every aspect of a service which nationally involves more than 600,000 interments a year.

Only a small proportion are handled by all-women teams, but Dominic Maguire, spokesman for the National Association of Funeral Directors, thinks that may change with the number of female undertakers edging upwards. Removal of the body, prepa-

ration for burial, driving the hearse, directing the proceedings - it's all in a day's work. The only thing the women don't do is carry a coffin on the shoulder. "Wherever possible, we arrange for the coffin to be trolleyed," Mrs Teague said.

Mrs Nutt also helps her husband Steve to run a business called Green Undertakings at Watchet on the Somerset coast. Practical and to the point, she declared: "Being near coffins doesn't

make me squeamish. I talk to them because I believe it's important to understand that the deceased means a lot to relatives." Mr Nutt hopes more women will enter a profession which in Britain turns over around £1bn a year, split between some 3,500 firms.

"Women have an equal role in funerals," he maintains. Questions of choice arose, he said. "If a woman had a female doctor, she would perhaps prefer a female team to take care of her funeral."

Nursing home director jailed for reign of terror

Ian Burrell

A nursing home director was jailed for two-and-a-half years yesterday for ill-treating mentally handicapped residents in two private care homes during a 10-year reign of terror.

Angela Rowe, 39, had been convicted after a trial at Kingston Crown Court last month which heard she helped run a regime where the atmosphere was more like an army camp than a nursing home.

Her colleague, Lorraine Field, 42, was jailed for 15 months for mistreating residents and Desmond Tully, 33, was fined £750 for one count of mistreating a resident.

The police investigation into the scandal was launched in 1994 after *The Independent* revealed that a secret Buckinghamshire County Council report had found residents were subjected "to a catalogue of abuse, deprivation, humiliation and torment."

Residents at Stoke Place Mansion House and Stoke Green House in Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire, were slapped, had their hair pulled and jugs of water thrown over them.

Residents were denied toilet paper, soap and toothpaste and one woman with Down's Syndrome was made to eat her meals outside, even in the pouring rain.

Rowe ran the homes from 1983 to 1993 with her husband, Gordon, who died in his fume-filled car in March last year on the eve of charges being pressed against him by police.

He would have faced charges of rape and would have been held "principally responsible" for the cruelty at the homes, which were run under the name of Longcare Ltd.

An inquiry by Buckinghamshire County Council in 1994 unearthed the catalogue of sexual and physical abuse by Mr Rowe at the homes, which housed about 70 residents.

Sentencing the trio at Kingston Crown Court yesterday, Judge John Baker said:

"The primary aim of those who take on responsibility for looking after those who are mentally handicapped must be to see as far as possible that the residents lead a happy and contented life as far as they can within their limitations."

"Physical contact must be limited to helping a resident or restraining him or her when necessary. Physical punishment and any form of humiliation or degradation can't be allowed."

He told Rowe the offences she had committed were "extremely serious matters". She sat emotionless in the dock as Judge Baker passed the 30-month sentence. Lorraine Field was sentenced to 15 months.

Judge Baker added: "Parliament has said that the maximum sentence for ill-treatment is two years' imprisonment or a fine, or both."

"There is an urgent need for Parliament to provide a comprehensive review of the courts' sentencing powers."

Nevertheless, relatives of the victims said they were delighted to see Rowe and Field put behind bars.

Terry McCarthy whose son Shaun, 37, was abused by Rowe, said: "We would all have wanted more but it was good to see them going to prison."

The families of the victims are now looking to pursue civil action claims against Rowe.

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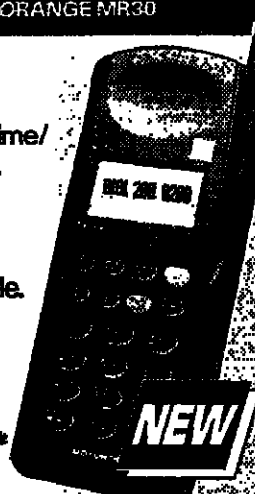
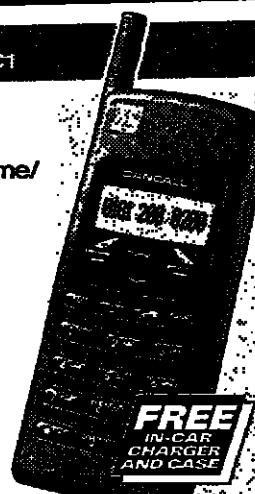
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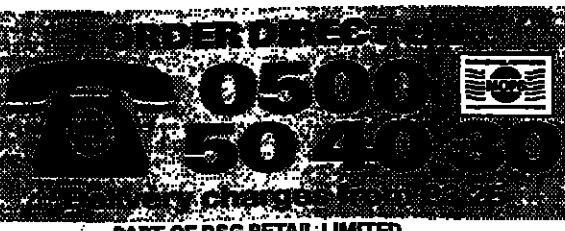
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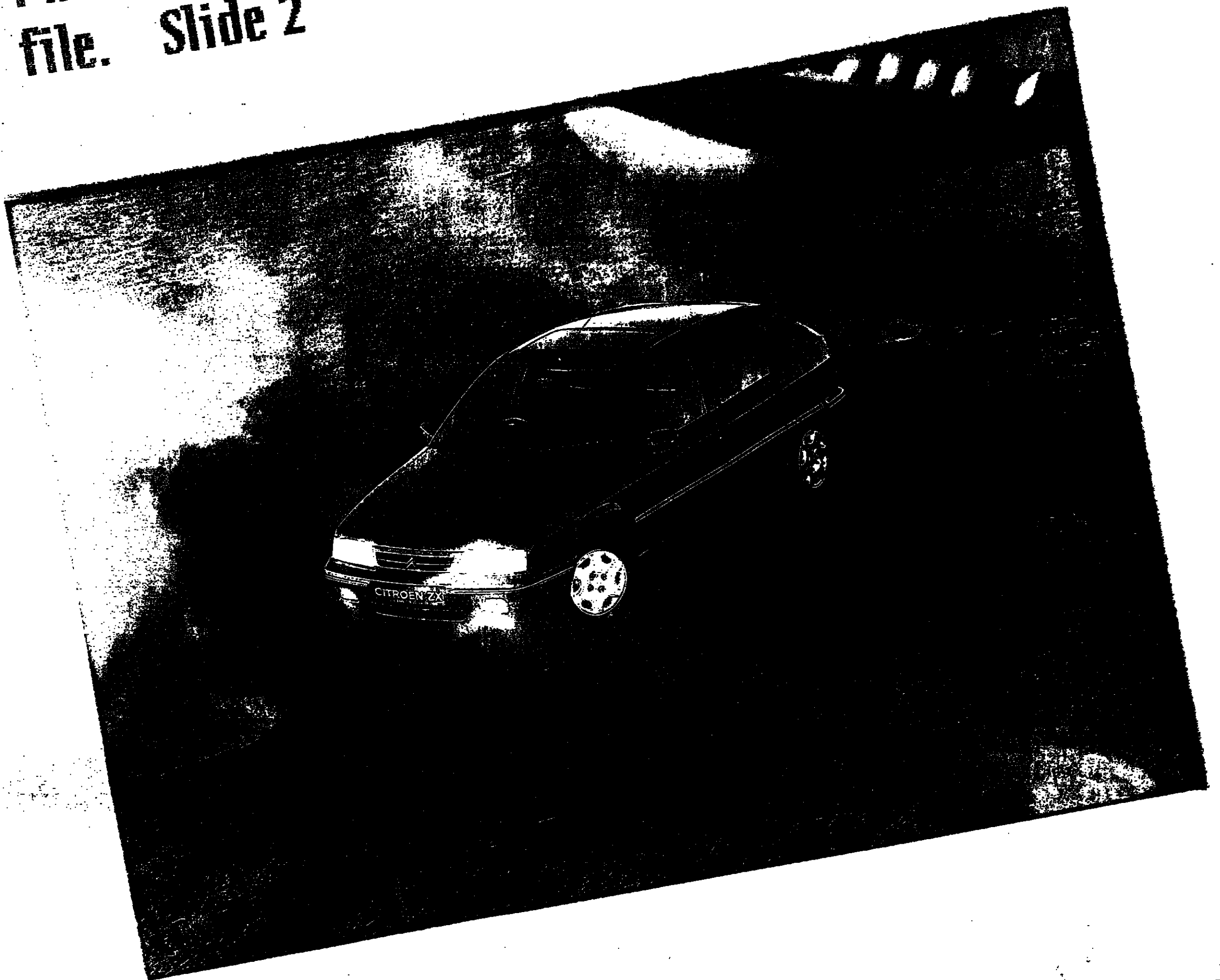


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Radio 4 chief tries to disarm critics

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

A pre-emptive charm offensive by Radio 4's new controller, James Boyle, has mollified the person likely to be the most vocal critic of his forthcoming shake-up of the station's schedule.

Mr Boyle and a team of researchers and commissioning editors visited Jocelyn Hay, chairman of the influential BBC lobbying group Voice of the Listener and Viewer, three weeks ago to present the research figures that are informing his planned changes.

Mr Boyle made the visit even

time, they cannot be allowed to ossify," she said.

"We were very impressed that he made the effort to come and talk to us. Mr Boyle showed us how listeners tune into the station in the mornings, lunchtime and in the evenings for the news and *The Archers*. He wants to manage the audience drops in between those times and strengthen the figures.

"We were very assured that he accepts Radio 4 is a unique broadcaster of high quality intelligent speech programming. And he is on the record as saying he will not slaughter any sacred cows. We have to accept that he is approaching the changes sensitively and intelligently."

Ms Hay's main concern is that the BBC might use the changes to Radio 4 as an excuse to cut the station's budget.

"I have been doing what any responsible new controller would do," said Mr Boyle yesterday. "Padding around slowly but surely talking to listeners, talking to producers and talking to lobbying groups asking if Radio 4 is the way it ought to be, are there things we ought to be doing?"

Mr Boyle appeared on the *Today* programme yesterday to calm the fears of listeners about wholesale changes, although he managed to deny that he had completed his final plans while assuring *Archers* fans that the omnibus edition would not be moving to Sunday afternoons.

"I could go through the speculation picking off the programmes one by one, but why bother."

He did hint at the rumoured extension to the *Today* programme, which would involve giving it a start time of 6am and running it seven days a week, when he said: "News and current affairs drives Radio 4 - it is one of the things that listeners come in for."

However, Mr Boyle appears to have bypassed the National Union of Farmers on his tour of listeners. If *Today* is extended, *Farming Today* may be axed and the NFU said its members would be "extremely angry".



Fears over the *Today* programme were calmed

though he yesterday dismissed as "the wildest of wild speculation" stories that *Farming Today* is to be axed, the *Today* programme may be extended to Sundays, and that the times of *The Archers* and *Woman's Hour* may be moved.

Ms Hay, inveterate letter writer and trenchant critic of the dropping of Peter Hobday from the *Today* programme and the use of Radio 4 long-wave for *Test Match Special*, said yesterday she was willing to give Mr Boyle the benefit of the doubt: "Any channel or institution has to be refreshed from time to

Thief's hoard from beyond the grave

Ian Burrell

Hundreds of headstones missing from a London cemetery have been found in a flat belonging to a man who has spent years using the masonry to build marble and granite structures in his home.

The hoard was discovered after a cemetery gardener saw a man wheeling a trolley through the graveyard containing a tombstone concealed in a plastic bag.

The gardener, Derek Thomas, apprehended the man at Tottenham cemetery, north London, until police arrived.

Later police searched a one-bedroom flat nearby crammed with 277 headstones, marble vases and kerb-stones from the edges of graves. Police have valued the cache at over £20,000.

Tombstones were found in the hallway and were piled up in cupboards from the floor to the ceiling. Police discovered more stacks of headstones in the lounge and the kitchen.

"They were really crammed in," said one officer. "There was hardly any room left in the flat for him."

The man had a penchant for square and rectangular pieces of granite and marble. More sinister was the discovery of urns containing ashes and several bones, which police have sent away for analysis.

Nigel Morgan, the cemetery manager, said pieces have been going missing from graves for around three years but staff assumed it was vandalism.

He said the man was a familiar figure in Tottenham and had once been barred from

the cemetery as a nuisance.

"When he was arrested I asked the police if they could go round and look in his place and this was when they discovered all these walls and memorials he had built. Our staff worked until 1.30am removing them all so that they could be returned to the cemetery," he said.

Constable Andy Keel, of Tottenham police, said the only rooms in the flat without piles of tombstones were the bedroom and bathroom. "It was quite a shock. We thought we might find some other headstones at the home, but nothing like this."

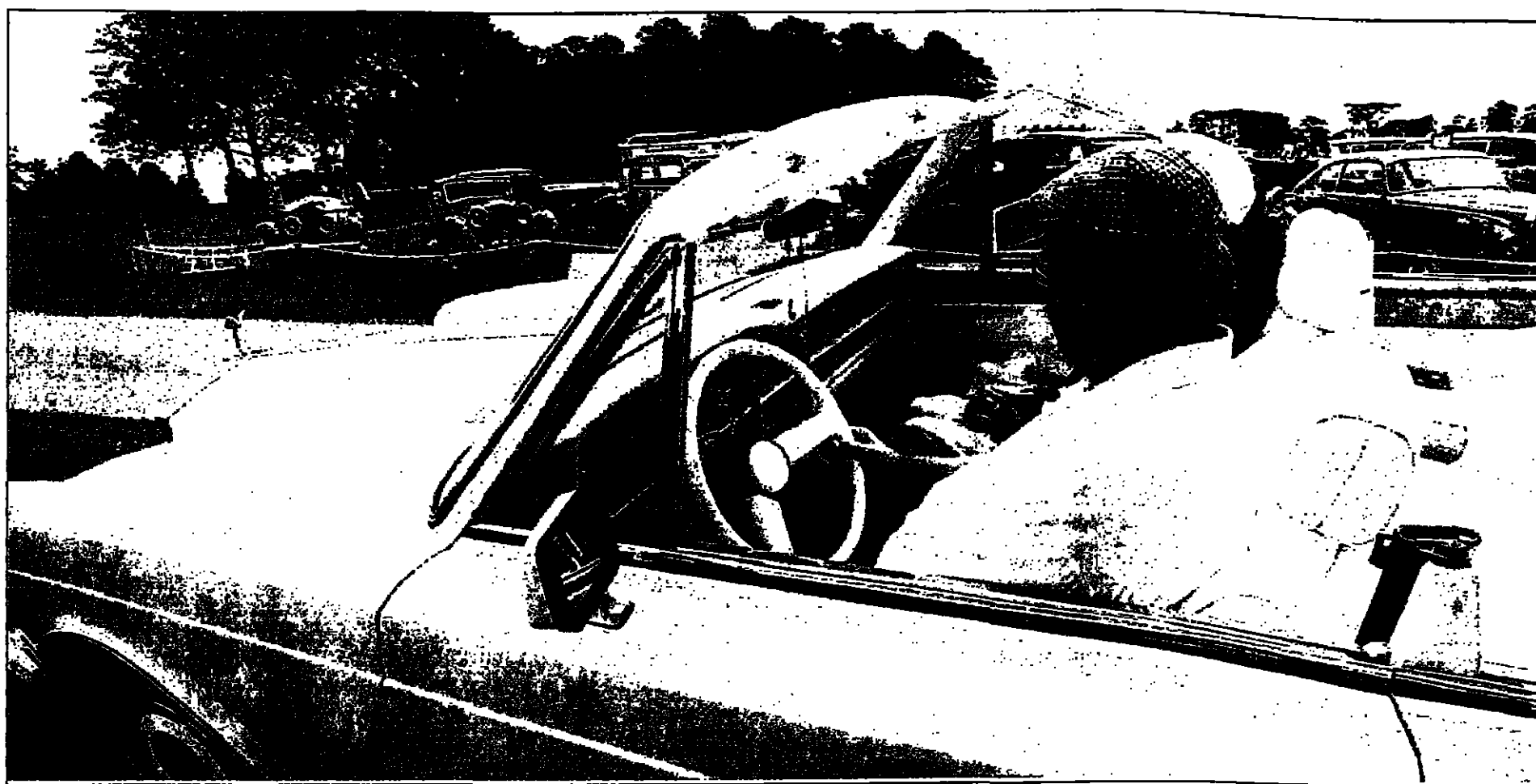
Other than the graveyard objects, the flat was "unremarkable", he said.

Next Tuesday, the lost tombstones will go on display at the Old Chapel at Tottenham cemetery, in the hope that they will be reclaimed by the families of the deceased.

There are 217 stones with some form of writing on them but 60 are believed to be unidentifiable. A dozen have already been reclaimed.

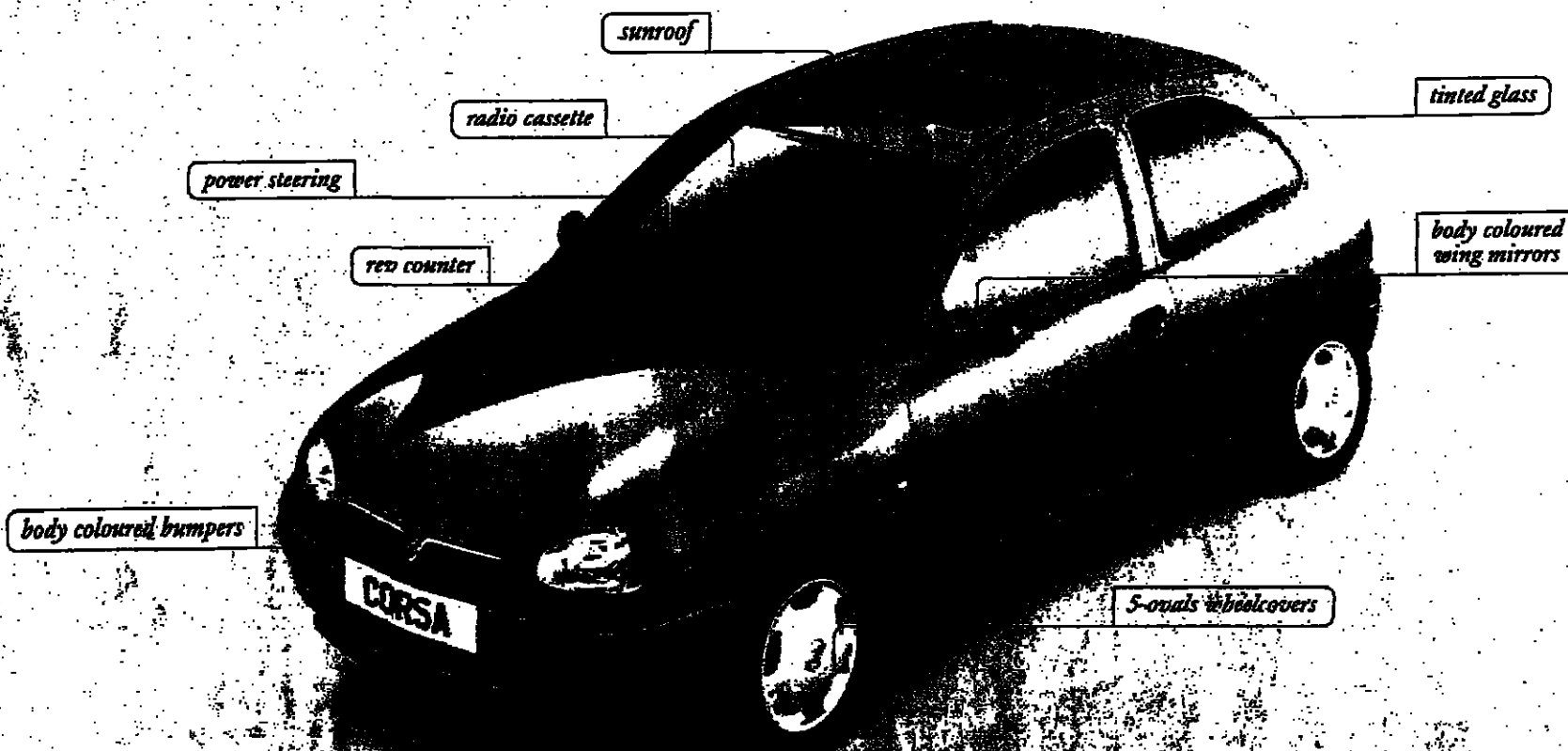
Mr Morgan said: "Some of the headstones have full names and will be fairly easy to identify but others have simple inscriptions like 'mum and dad' and they will be more difficult to trace," he said.

In a bizarre week for the Tottenham police, officers also uncovered a stash of nearly 100 zimmer frames hoarded by a 19-year-old youth, who had stacked them in rooms and the back garden of his house. Police said they were worth about £100 each and had been taken from St Bartholomew's hospital, central London.



Marque of distinction: Swiss enthusiast Hans Bieri arriving at Althorp Park, Northamptonshire, for a weekend auction of classic Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars Photograph: Keith Dobney

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politics

Hague quashes the rumours: 'I'm not gay'

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

William Hague has unequivocally dashed Commons gossip, smear and innuendo about his sexuality and private life.

Before he launched his current bid for the leadership of the party, Mr Hague was confronted by one of his senior supporters about widespread smears about his private life.

In one conversation, he was asked whether he was gay, and he assured his campaign team members that he would not have put himself forward if that had been the case.

But in a newspaper interview yesterday, he "came out", telling a reporter who asked whether he was upset by being thought of as a homosexual: "Well, I'm not."

"My friends know things like that are ridiculous," Mr Hague told the *Daily Telegraph*. "If you are a politician, some people will always want to do you down. I don't lose a moment's sleep over things like that."

"People have said I've been secretly married, secretly divorced, had children I've hidden, gone to a totally different school from the one I actually went to. I would only have to worry if it were true. Water off a duck's back."

The hot-house atmosphere of the Commons is a notorious breeding ground for the most scurrilous stories about senior politicians; the higher they climb the dirtier become the claims spread against them.

Some years ago, it was said that one Cabinet minister used prostitutes for a perverted form of sexual gratification; in another case it appeared a smear was being perpetrated against another senior minister with "corroboration" from the police.

In both cases, no evidence was ever forthcoming. There is little doubt that if there had been evidence, the two men would have been exposed.

Given his current lead in the Tory leadership race, Mr Hague evidently felt the need to clarify the matter for the benefit of any MPs who had con-

tinuing doubts in advance of next Tuesday's second-round ballot.

Mr Hague's engagement to Ffion Jenkins, a civil servant whom he met as Welsh secretary, was seen at the time by some MPs as an early indication that the candidate would give the party nothing to worry about.

As the *Independent* on Sunday reported last week: "Their engagement has had the happy effect of squashing rumours that Hague - unmarried and apparently with little in the way of a love life - is gay."

The meaner question, of course, is what Ffion makes of the rumours. But Hague says, a little resignedly, that the issue has not come up. "No, she knows me very well. She knows what I'm like." He remained very good-natured during all this, although he did retreat in his chair and look a bit nervous.

"How did he feel about the gossip himself - it was not very nice, surely?" Hague smiled, tolerantly. "You just have to brush it off. I've had all sorts of rumours about me."



Change of scene: The Wales Tourist Board, which covers Gower Peninsula, is among those facing a shake-up Photograph: Rob Stratton

Quango to offer jobs for the girls

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

Quangos are to be opened up so that many more women, ethnic minorities and people from rural areas will sit on their committees, the Secretary of State for Wales, Ron Davies, announced yesterday.

Mr Davies pledged to end the "jobs for the boys" culture which has led to some people sitting on many committees, often being paid considerable amounts. Mr Davies wants to go further than the rules set by Len Peach, the Commissioner for Public Appointments, who requires most paid posts to be advertised.

He is scrapping the current list of 7,000 people who are candidates for public appointment and will draw up a new list from people responding to public advertisements.

In future, Mr Davies said, posts will be advertised widely and candidates appointed strictly on merit. He said: "I want to ensure that the whole process of public appointments is open to scrutiny and is fully accountable."

Mr Davies's move can be seen as a precursor to a similar strategy in the rest of the UK. Welsh quangos have been particularly criticised in the past with a number of scandals involving chairmen and accusations of patronage, and Mr Davies was keen to act quickly on Labour election pledges to

make quangos more accountable. Quangos have a particular prominent role in Wales with responsibility for many aspects of government including some, such as the Welsh Development Agency, which have no English equivalent.

The minister has responsibility for making around 700 appointments to public bodies in the principality. Under the new procedures, more than 1,000 members serving on around 100 quangos may also have to compete for reappointment when their term of office ends. They also include the Wales Tourist Board (seven members) the Welsh Medical Committee (22) the Staff Commission for Wales (six) the Arts Council of Wales (18) and the Historic Buildings Council for Wales (seven).

Mr Davies said: "By opening appointments up to public advertising and selection against objective and publicly-stated criteria, we can put behind us the days of 'jobs for the boys' and people appointed on the basis of who they knew or where they had lunch." He wants more "candidates for appointment who are not just from the Cardiff area but come from all parts of Wales."

Mr Davies said he intended to start with a new list of possible candidates, drawn from those responding to advertisements for public appointments and considered suitable for appointment.

Dobson invokes wrath over hospital charges

Jeremy Laurance
and Colin Brown

Frank Dobson's refusal to rule out new charges for the NHS, which provoked the wrath of Cabinet colleagues and medical organisations, was blamed yesterday on the existence of current hospital charges which penalise the poorest patients.

Ministers were furious with the Secretary of State for Health for a gaffe over the possibility of charging for visits by the family doctor which plunged the Government into its first serious row since the election, and opened up Tory charges of "betraying" the voters.

Mr Dobson's reluctance to clear the air on charges was attributed to the little known practice under which the poorest patients are charged for long-term care, by making deductions from their benefits, while others who are better off receive it free.

The existence of the anomaly makes it a prime candidate for consideration in the Government's current review of the NHS's £44bn.

Mr Dobson was effectively slapped down by Tony Blair for fuelling the speculation. "We want to repair the NHS after years of Conservative damage,

not undermine it," the Prime Minister said during a question-and-answer session with the public in Worcester.

Health experts said Mr Dobson had been put "between a rock and a hard place" by the Treasury but coming after the rows over his warning that tobacco sponsorship of sport would be stopped, and attacks on bosses for producing "fat-cops", questions were being asked around Whitehall about his long-term future.

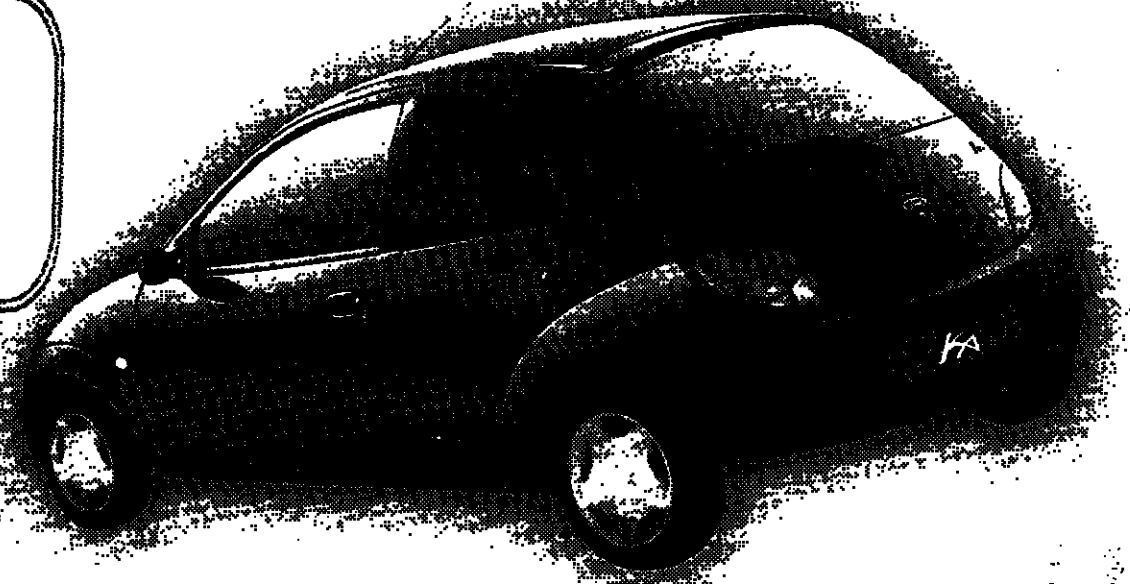
Downing Street ordered an inquiry into Mr Dobson's remarks and his appearance on the BBC *Today* programme yesterday when he failed to scotch the reports. The British Medical Association echoed the general dismay by condemning the suggestion of new charges as "unfair and inefficient." A statement last night from Mr Dobson said: "Ideas floated by journalists today are simply scare stories."

Some of Mr Dobson's senior colleagues were highly critical of his handling, although he had adopted the Treasury line that nothing could be ruled in, and nothing ruled out.

Ministerial sources said Mr Dobson should have made it clear there will be no hospital closures this winter.

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The loner's fantasies that led to death of a firefighter

Michael Streeter

A security guard who caused a fire in which a female firefighter died was found guilty of manslaughter yesterday.

Fleur Lombard, 21, became the first British firewoman to be killed in peacetime service when a "flashover" fire enveloped her during a blaze at a supermarket. Shortly before her death she had been presented at her graduation with an award called the Silver Axe for the best recruit of her intake.

Ms Lombard's mother, Jane, said yesterday: "I never wanted Fleur to join the service. But it is what she wanted to do. She knew the risks."

Martin Cody, 21, the security guard who started the blaze, had been fascinated by fire since childhood. He started the fire at Leo's store in Bristol after becoming "bored" on his first day. He later telephoned a colleague to say: "It is a good one; it is total."

Cody, from Knowle, Bristol, was found guilty of the manslaughter of Ms Lombard on the eighth day of his trial at Exeter Crown Court - the first day in which reporting restrictions were lifted. He was also found guilty of deliberately setting fire to the store.

The judge, Mr Justice Tuckey, adjourned the hearing until 1 September for reports. Cody was remanded in custody.

David Spens, QC, for the defence, said he would be considering an appeal.

After the verdict, Ms Lombard's father, Roger, spoke of the family's relief at the outcome. "We are also very pleased with the implication that this young man may get psychiatric help. If this is the way the sentencing comes out it would be a good thing."

He added: "We are all extremely proud of her. She died

doing what she wanted to do."

Detective Sergeant Steve Gittens, who led the investigation, said: "It has been a very emotional case and we all felt it."

Cody, a self-absorbed character who dreamt of being a hero from an early age, fantasising about performing gallant deeds while wearing uniforms.

As a youth Cody earned the title of the "most bullied schoolboy in Britain", when his mother kept him away from lessons after he claimed that he had suffered severe bullying over three years. His headmaster insisted at the time that it was a much more complex situation than a straightforward case of bullying, and that Cody needed educational support.

During Cody's school years a number of unexplained small fires broke out - in bins, waste piles and behind sheds - often when he was in the vicinity.

His first real job came in March 1995, as a security guard with Integrated Security. His security patrols were marked by small incidents, such as apparent acts of vandalism, or repeated emergency service call-outs and Cody quickly left. Yet within weeks he was again working as a security guard - with Burns International - and went for his first solo duty at Leo's store at Staple Hill.

Paul Chadd, for the prosecution, told the jury how, an hour before the fire, Cody told shop assistant Louise Mains: "This is boring. I wish something exciting would happen."

Afterwards, before he learnt of Ms Lombard's death, Cody had seemed "happy". A witness saw him punching downwards with his clenched fist and shouting "yes" in a gesture like a "footballer who had just scored a goal".

Ironically, Cody had helped the store's deputy manager to

escape by smashing a window with a microwave oven.

During the trial members of the jury came close to tears as they heard how Ms Lombard died in the "flash-over" - a horrifying explosion caused by a combination of extreme fire conditions which sent temperatures soaring to about 1,000°C.

The newly-qualified firefighter was a member of blue watch at Bristol's Speedwell Fire Station at the time the alarm was raised.

Soon after entering the pitch-black building the teams were ordered to evacuate as explosions tore through the roof of the two-storey store. Seconds

later the "flash-over" erupted. In a statement, fireman Patrick Foley described how he returned with other rescuers to find Ms Lombard. "I could see only the remains of clothing on her body. I could not see her mask or helmet. As soon as we laid her down I heard someone say 'She's gone'."

Fleur Lombard, Britain's first female firefighter to die in peacetime service. Top left: The supermarket blaze in which she died and (centre) arsonist Martin Cody

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Blair urged to re-route Orangemen

Tom Blair is being urged to step into the parade issue in Northern Ireland, and to announce an early decision to prohibit Orangemen marching through two nationalist areas next month.

The move comes after loyalists issued a stark "no compromise" message and insisted the flashpoint Drumcree parade in Portadown must go ahead.

In response, community leaders called for the Orangemen to be barred from marching along the nationalist Garvaghy Road in Portadown and the Lower Ormeau Road in Belfast next month.

Representatives of the nationalist Lower Ormeau Concerned Community (LOCC) travelled to London yesterday to hand in a letter to the Prime Minister at Downing Street.

The letter asks the Government to make an early decision to re-route parades away from the Ormeau and Garvaghy Roads, and to "give assurances that they won't give in to the threats of the Orange Order".

Michael Goodman, a representative of the LOCC who is on speaking tour in Britain, said: "The importance of an early decision will be that it will ease tensions and help reassure people in the Ormeau and Garvaghy Roads that they won't be cowed or abused by the RIC again this year."

The loyalist insistence that the Drumcree parade must go ahead came last night, when the government-appointed Parades Commission was given a hostile reception at a public meeting in the town to try to resolve the crisis with the parade only three weeks away.

Around 120 loyalists packed into the town hall and there were angry scenes when a lone voice suggested compromise.

Alastair Graham, the commission chairman, said it was the "most volatile" expression of

the Protestant viewpoint he had ever seen. He did not now expect a formal agreement between the two sides, but there was still hope of some sort of compromise, he said, adding: "I do believe the Chief Constable... will work very hard to try to find some centre path that recognises the views of both communities."

Meanwhile, a compromise suggested jointly by Northern Ireland's two morning newspapers has won backing from 20,000 people, the papers announced yesterday.

The *Unionist News Letter* and the nationalist *Irish News* proposed a two-year compromise deal under which the parade went ahead one year along its traditional Garvaghy Road route, and was re-routed the other year in a bid to avoid confrontation. A phoned line set up by the papers to take pledges of support for the compromise has drawn 2,000 calls an hour from as far afield as America, the *News Letter* reported.

Nationalist residents of the Garvaghy Road have also met and rejected proposals put to them in a letter by the Orange Order. The residents said the proposals contained nothing new, and they were making plans to cover every contingency.

The Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, Ronnie Finagan, who will have to decide whether the Drumcree parade goes ahead or is re-routed, yesterday backed the papers' call for compromise, saying: "I salute the historic and thought-provoking initiative."

However, people should not focus on the acceptability or otherwise of the one suggested "solution" to the problem, he said.

Rather, they should focus on the one basic rule to be followed - "that whatever the outcome, violence or the threat of violence is unacceptable and must not be used".



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international

France and Germany divided on jobs

John Lichfield
Poitiers

Unexpectedly sharp disagreements on jobs and public spending yesterday prevented France and Germany from reaching a common position on the single currency before the EU summit in Amsterdam on Monday and Tuesday.

Negotiations are to continue throughout the weekend and both the new French Prime minister, Lionel Jospin, and the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, predicted yesterday that an agreement would be found to prevent an Euro crisis in Amsterdam.

Mr Jospin surprised Chancellor Kohl at a Franco-German summit here by producing new proposals for EU action to boost growth and create jobs. The new French premier wants, among other things, to revive plans for a large programme of EU transport projects, first floated in 1994 but abandoned for lack of funds. Chancellor Kohl apparently retorted that he could not agree to any increase

in EU spending, while German and other domestic budgets were being squeezed to meet the guidelines for membership of Euro.

The new French government warned earlier this week that it would refuse to ratify a pact on budgetary discipline within the single currency, due to be signed in Amsterdam, unless the EU also strengthens its policies for growth and common economic decision-making. It had seemed that a compromise, based on a general declaration of principle, would be worked out and, possibly, approved in advance by Paris and Bonn in Poitiers yesterday. But the new French proposals, delivered to Bonn and other EU capitals Thursday, have seriously complicated the negotiations.

The French suggestions, short of specific proposals for extra EU spending, Mr Jospin described them as "ideas" and "demands or conditions" that said they were based on decisions already taken by the EU heads of government at their Essen summit in 1994 (pre-



Photo: AP
Jospin and Chirac: France's prime minister and president, Lionel Jospin (left) and Jacques Chirac, at Poitiers yesterday

summit to be a reference to vague plans, since shelved, for investment in transport projects). Chancellor Kohl told a press conference: "I am convinced that we will arrive at an agreement, as we always have in the

past," he said. But, earlier in a 30-minute tête-à-tête with Mr Jospin, Mr Kohl apparently said he would not accept any form of words which implied a move towards a more reflationary, or spending-led economic policy.

Both sides were anxious last night to play down suggestions of a breakdown in negotiations or even a sharp disagreement. They said it was never intended that the Franco-German summit should solve the Euro

dispute on its own. President Chirac, who was reduced virtually to a summit master of ceremonies by Mr Jospin's victory in the parliamentary elections, said: "There exists a willingness, a full agreement to reach, in the

coming hours, a settlement." It is extremely unusual, however, for the two countries at the heart of the European Union to enter a critical summit without a common approach to the principal subjects on the agenda.

da. French and German officials are to continue working over the weekend. There will likely be renewed mediation efforts by the European Commission and the Dutch government, which hosts the EU council president. An emergency meeting of finance ministers may be held in Amsterdam on the eve of the summit tomorrow night.

Although Mr Jospin's leadership caught many people by surprise, it seems unlikely that the new French government will risk undermining the single currency project within two weeks of taking office. French and German officials believe that Mr Jospin will be prepared to accept a more or less vague compromise declaration in Amsterdam next week. ■ Wiesbaden (Reuters) — Euro-12 bank council member Ernst Weiteke told a conference of European economic and monetary union yesterday that the recent dispute over reflationary Germany's official reserves could have hurt the Bundesbank's long-term standing.

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Dying leader takes his last stand for glory

Franjo Tudjman is poised to win the Croatian presidency tomorrow

Marcus Tanner

The hair is thinning, the face gaunt. But age and illness seem only to have spurred Franjo Tudjman on to near-superhuman efforts in his drive for re-election tomorrow as Croatian President.

The prize is in the bag. A toadying, controlled media and a reputation as the man who took on the Yugoslav army after Croatia declared independence in 1991 – and won – have seen to that.

But Mr Tudjman is treating this election, which cancer means will be his last, as if his place in history depended on it. "He doesn't just want to win – there's real desperation there," said one observer.

"Together, my opponents will get half the votes that I'll get," he boasted on Wednesday. Before an adoring crowd of 10,000 at his last pre-election rally in Zagreb on Thursday, the 75-year-old former general hammered home the message he knows will strike the deepest chord: the man who delivered Croatia's independence is the man who will restore the war-shattered economy, too.

It is only a year since Mr Tudjman's liberal and left-wing opponents humiliated his HDZ nationalists in elections for the mayor and city council of the capital, Zagreb. Since then the opposition has squandered its strength in internal squabbles. Mr Tudjman's two opponents, the former dissident and poet Vlado Gotovac, and Zdravko Tomac, a former communist official, seem likely to get only 20 per cent, compared to Mr Tudjman's 60 per cent.

Most Croats want to macho leaders, and Mr Tudjman's military uniforms and bullying manner are no turn-off outside the refined political culture of Zagreb.

When US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright berated him over attacks on Serb refugees attempting to return to their homes in Croatia's recaptured Krajina region, she merely boosted his standing among an electorate suspicious of foreign intentions, and hostile to Serbs.

"What people see is a man who is dying, but who still has

so much force and will to win, and they like that, because they see him as a fighter," said Jas Sabalic, a journalist with the opposition newspaper, *Tjednik*. "They can sense his opponents are resigned to losing."

Resignation is understandable, as Mr Tudjman has barred their access to the powerful state television. "Gotovac and Tomac got one hour precisely, and Tudjman is on every minute," said Ms Sabalic.

Both opposition candidates have complained to the electoral commission, but this body, stacked with Tudjmanites, dismissed their complaints.

In a worrying sign of how tolerant Croatia has become under Mr Tudjman, Mr Gotovac was attacked last week at a rally by a soldier who leapt onto the stage, shouted "Long live Peko" (Croatia's Second World War Fascist dictator) and beat the candidate with a belt.

As one observer said: "This



Tudjman: Bullying manner goes down well

disgusting attack was not surprising, as Tudjman is always saying that anyone who opposes him is an enemy of the state."

Mr Tudjman makes much of alleged fifth-columnists working to subvert the nation's independence. In a televised interview before the poll, the President proclaimed: "We are facing an organised activity, including psychological war aimed at obstructing our independence waged by many people in Croatia and abroad."

Marcus Tanner is author of *Croatia: a Nation Forged in War* (Nile).

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مكتبة من الأدب

Clinton grasps the nettle on US race divide

Mar Dejesky
Washington

President Bill Clinton travels to southern California today to give a speech that is intended to settle one and the theme for his second term as president and to take his claim to a place in history. The occasion is the commencement ceremony at the University of California at San Diego, at the highly sensitive subject of which Mr Clinton will speak.

The importance and the delicacy of this theme can be gauged by the fact that, while successfully wooing black voters, Mr Clinton none the less stepped away from the issue of race relations throughout his first term and it is only now, almost two years into his second term, that he feels finally ready to tackle it. Even then there have been delays. The initiative has been belated several times in recent months, only to dissolve in fits of disagreements among advisers.

In general atmosphere of sleaze and questionable morality that pervaded the Clinton presidency, race relations is an issue on which Mr Clinton

President takes on issue that has damaged many leaders

anniversary of Jackie Robinson's debut for the Dodgers, the first time a black player had been admitted to a major league baseball team. Last month, Mr Clinton delivered an apology, in the presence of some of the survivors, for the notorious Tuskegee experiment, when several hundred black men in Alabama were denied treatment for syphilis in the cause of medical research.

Two days before going to San Diego, Mr Clinton announced the formation of a panel, chaired by an eminent historian of race relations, 82-year-old John Hope Franklin, to advise him on and contribute to policy proposals over the coming year.

A difference in perception between blacks and whites in America is one of the biggest problems he faces. An opinion poll conducted by Gallup and published earlier this week showed a majority of whites believe race relations had improved greatly in the last decade and obstacles to black advancement were minimal.

A majority of blacks, however, while recognising that their economic conditions might have improved, felt there were still many impediments to blacks and that it was up to the government to do something about it. Whites tended to think the time for government intervention was past and blacks should rely on themselves.

This division along racial lines makes any presidential initiative on race that entails spending taxpayers' money contentious and potentially divisive in its own right. Nor have Mr Clinton's preparations for today's initiative been plain sailing.

At the Jackie Robinson anniversary baseball game, the stadium was far from full, and derisive whistles could be heard from the crowd as Mr Clinton accompanied Robinson's widow on to the baseball diamond.

Even the response to the victory of the young mixed-race golfer, Tiger Woods, in the US Masters Golf tournament two months ago was not unalloyed. Many hailed his victory in the predominantly white

sport of golf as a harbinger of things to come - the eventual melding of a harmonious, multi-coloured nation.

Before Woods had even had time to savour his victory, however, fellow golfer Fuzzy Zoeller was cracking a joke to a television interviewer that had racial overtones, saying that he hoped Woods would not order "fried chicken and collard greens" - typical black, southern food - for next year's tournament dinner.

That public pressure demanded from Zoeller a series of abject public apologies was greeted as progress in race relations. But his remarks illustrated as clearly as last week's Gallup poll what Mr Clinton will be up against.

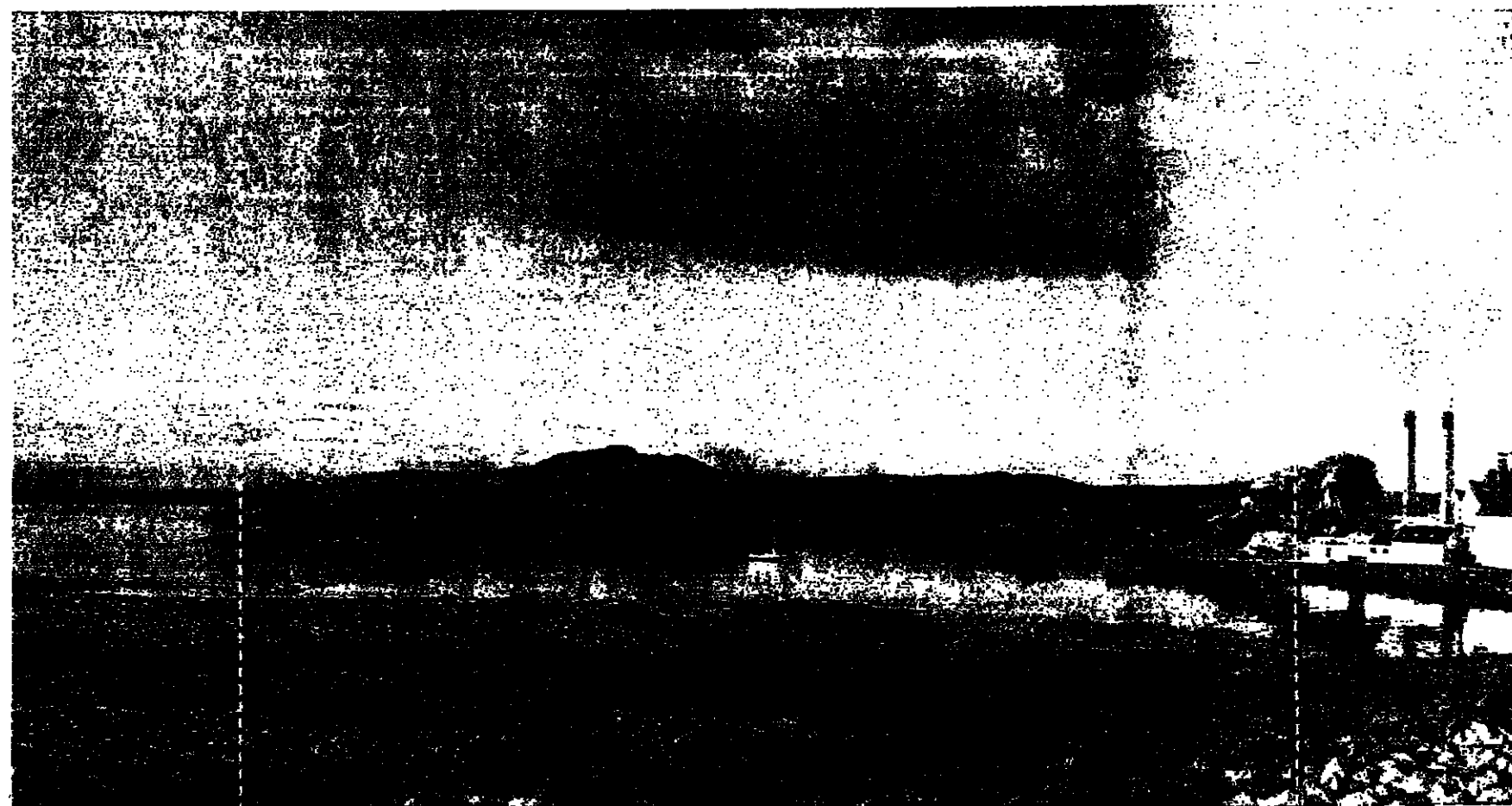


Little and large: Sumo wrestler Konishiki, nicknamed the Dumper Truck because of his massive 44-stone bulk, making eye contact with a schoolboy yesterday during a Sumo demonstration in advance of the Australian Grand Sumo Tournament in Sydney. Photograph: Megan Lewis/Reuters

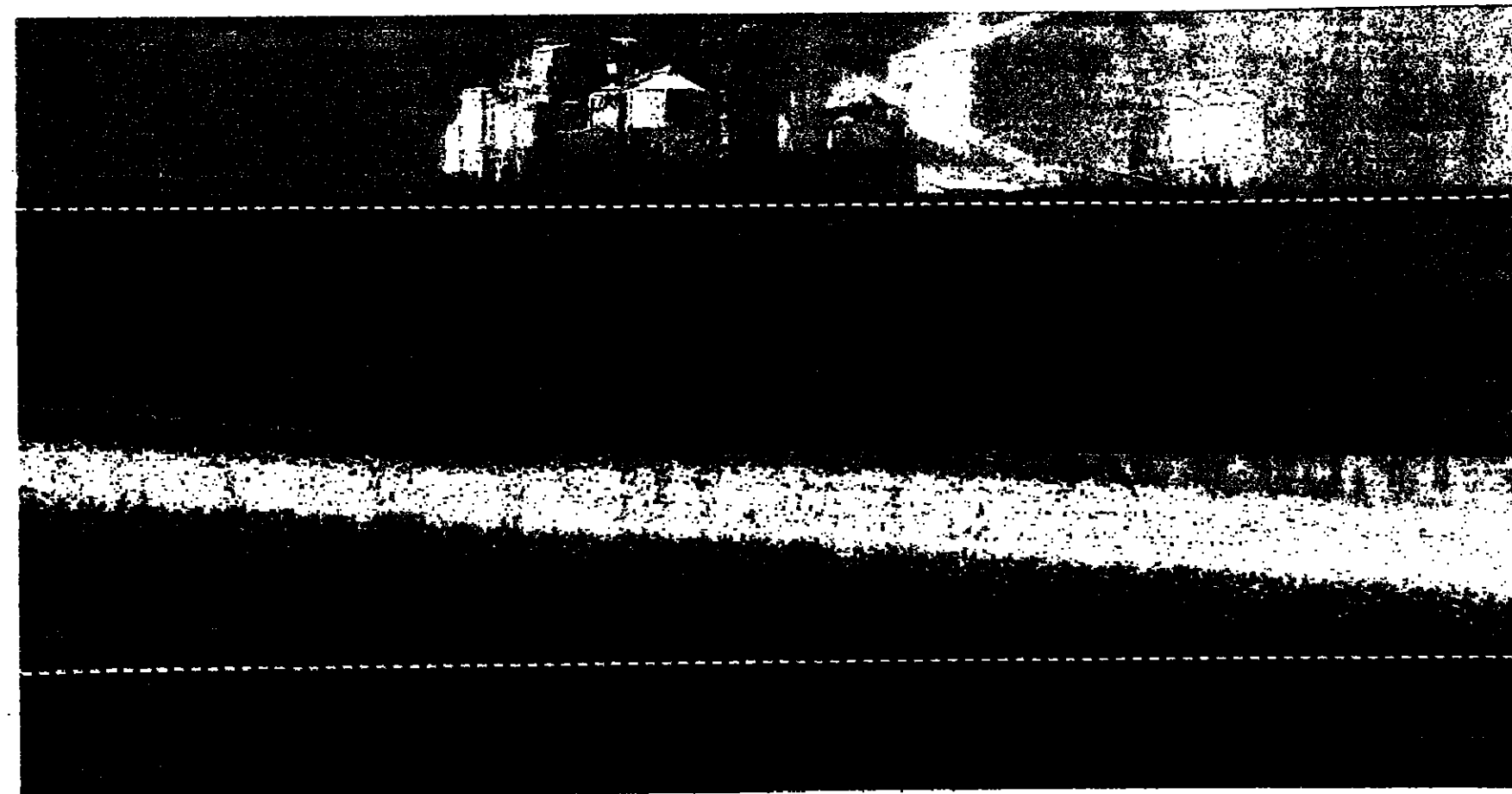


Fuzzy Zoeller: Had to eat up about fried chicken

entirely "clean", without a shadow of bigotry or ambivalence. He has spoken on several occasions about his distaste for the racial segregation that he experienced in his childhood in Arkansas, his support for federal government when it enforced the desegregation of schools in the state capital, Little Rock, and his horror at such violence ensued. The ground for today's initiative has been laid carefully, but it always smoothly. In April Mr Clinton attended a baseball match in New York to commemorate the 50th an-



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significant shorts

Russia's crime rate spirals out of control

Russia's crime rate has nearly doubled in the last five years, spurred by the activities of over 9,000 criminal gangs, Russia's top policeman acknowledged yesterday. Law enforcement agencies are concentrating on battling crime syndicates, which are estimated to have about 100 members, Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov told the cabinet. **AP - Moscow**

Chinese twist rule on buddhas

Chinese authorities in Tibet plan to issue rules on the veneration of reincarnated buddhas, to block the influence of the exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. The new regulations would govern the search for and selection of young children considered to be the reincarnated souls of the living buddhas. **Reuters - Peking**

Baker scores over Sahara

Bar Mustafa Sayed, foreign affairs spokesman for Morocco, said UN Special Envoy James Baker had "led a first" by obtaining talks between Morocco and the Polisario Front, which wants independence for the Western Sahara. Talks are scheduled for 23 June but Morocco has yet to say it will attend. **Reuters - London**

5 die in cinema inferno

At least 57 people died and more than 90 were injured in a fire that tore through a jam-packed cinema hall in the Indian capital, the authorities said. **Reuters - New Delhi**

Rich was a potential blast

Time mines placed by Nazi forces during the Second World War have been found under a football pitch where last week the German and Ukrainian under-21 teams met, a spokesman for the stadium said on Friday. "The mines have been in the ground for at least 55 years," a spokesman for Dynamo stadium, said. **Reuters - Kiev**

Dictators' lost children

Vittorio Mussolini, second son of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, died in a Rome clinic on Thursday. Vittorio, the third of five children, emigrated to Argentina after the war but returned to Italy. The daughter of Cuban leader Fidel Castro, meanwhile, has attacked her father for failing her and the Cuban people.

Alina Fernandez Revuelta, who escaped from Cuba in 1993, was in Mexico to promote her autobiography. **Reuters - Rome and Mexico City**



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his last
or glory
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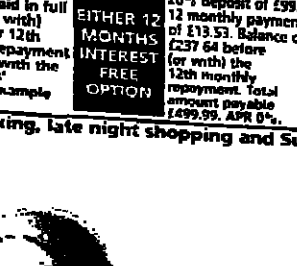
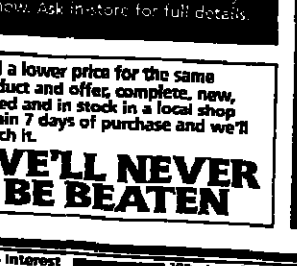
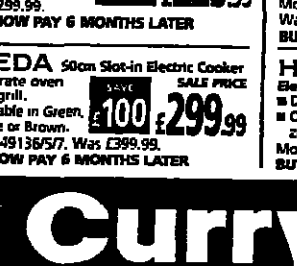
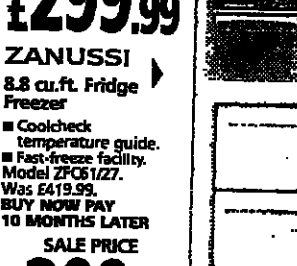
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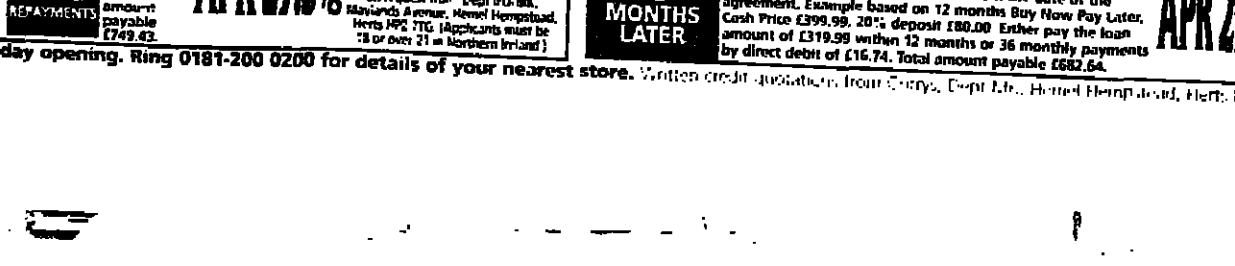
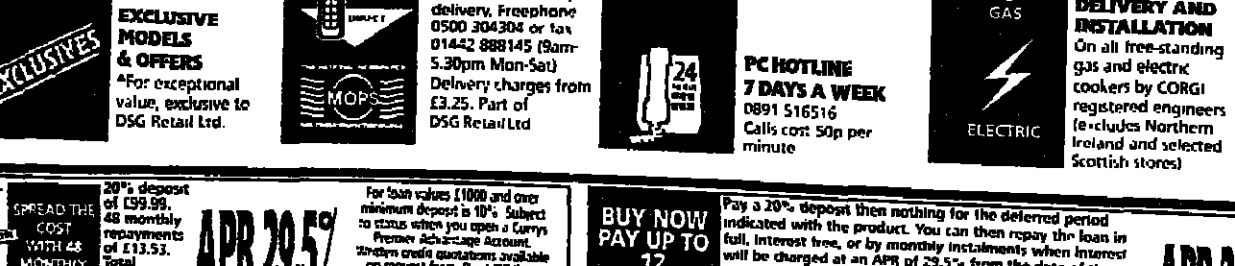
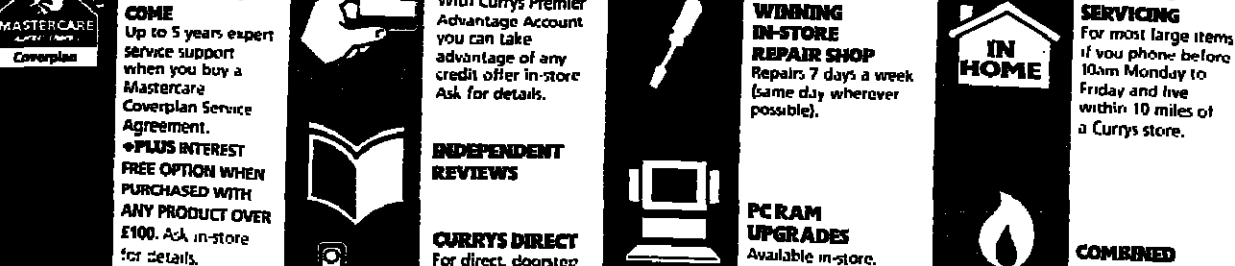
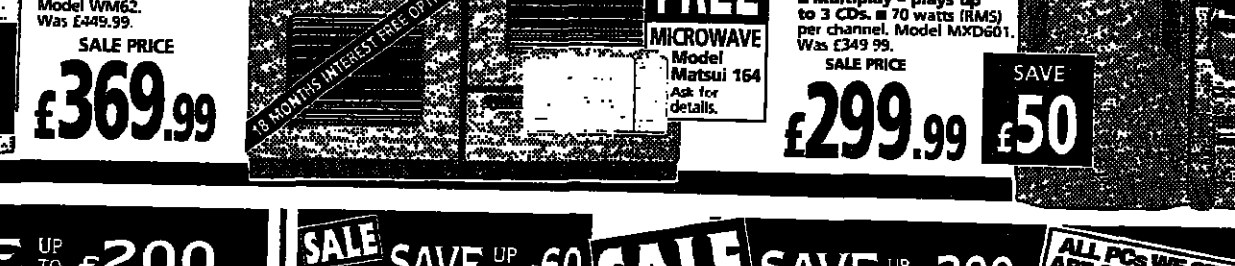
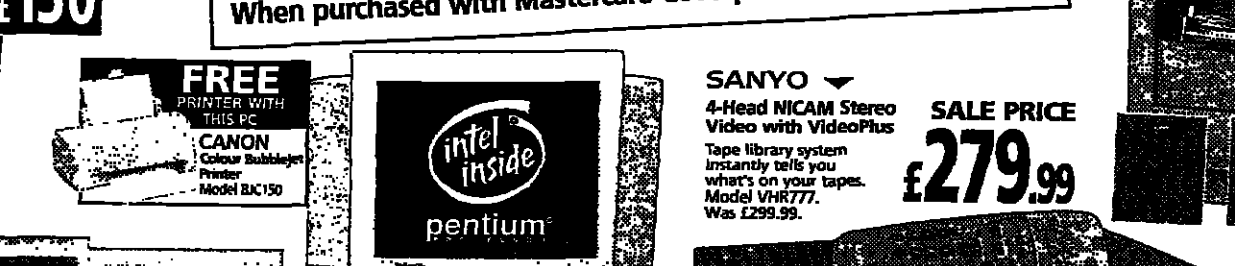
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Eva Stern, refusing to be silent despite failing to persuade the American media to commemorate Qana

Why a Manhattan secretary won't let Israel forget the massacre at Qana



by ROBERT FISK

When Eva Stern's grandfather Aaron Hersh climbed off the transport at Auschwitz extermination camp in June 1944, along with her mother Hannah and two aunts from their ultra-orthodox Jewish family, he was still holding his prayer shawl. "A Polish prisoner warned him he'd die if he didn't hand it over, but he refused," Eva Stern says. "Then a German officer ordered my grandfather to give the shawl to him while he was waiting in line for selection for the gas chambers. He again refused. So he shot my grandfather in the head. That's how he died."

In the lobby of the Manhattan hotel, Eva Stern speaks quickly, in an almost subdued voice, recalling the terrible story which her mother told her of the family's doomed journey from Czechoslovakia to Auschwitz. "She was only 17 and tried to save one of her sister's children by holding it in her arms. But another prisoner snatched it away and gave it back to her sister - because they would all die if Mengele saw both women with a child. So her sister and her children were all selected to die. And my mother lived."

"At least 70 members of her family were murdered. She was taken to Ravensbrück concentration camp and was eventually liberated by the Red Army. The incident with the child had the greatest impact on her. I can honestly say that my mother hasn't slept for 50 years."

But it is the death of Eva's grandfather Aaron Hersh - a Talmudic scholar by the age of 20, who was shot after refusing to surrender his *tallit* (Jewish prayer shawl), that has marked her life.

With scarcely suppressed anger, she opens a thick file on the seat beside her. Entitled "Israel's Operation 'Grapes of Wrath' and the Qana Massacre", it is her own work, a compilation of photographs and news reports - some from *The Independent* - of Israel's bombardment of southern Lebanon a year ago, in which more than 170 civilians were slaughtered. Ms Stern flicks her finger in fury at one of the pictures which shows Israeli soldiers standing in front of their battle tanks on the Lebanese border. The newspaper caption reads: "Israeli soldiers briefly halt their shelling to commemorate Holocaust Day." And Ms Stern looks at me to see if I understand why she is enraged at the picture.

"What would my grandfather say of this? What were those Israelis thinking as they were putting on their prayer shawls? Were they praying, 'Father who art in heaven, help me to kill as many Arabushim' as possible? Do they now have a right to kill without any guilt?"

"Arabushim" - a racist term for Arabs in the Hebrew language - was later used in an Israeli newspaper interview by one of the artillerymen who fired into the United Nations base at Qana last year. At least 109 civilians sheltering in the camp were killed, 55 of them children. Ms Stern has included an English translation of the interview from *Kol Ha'ir* in her file, a set of documents which she has sent to the UN, to the Lebanese delegation to the UN, and to prominent American journalists in New York.

She hoped to persuade the latter to mark the first anniversary of the Qana massacre on 18 April.

Ms Stern's sense of outrage is as brave as it is lonely; although many American Jews are troubled by the behaviour of Israel's right-wing government and the bloody adventures in which Israel has been involved in Lebanon over the past 20 years, most will not take kindly to Eva Stern's concern for the truth to be told.

"My feelings started slowly," she says. "I always had a problem with unquestioned obedience to authority. And when I thought about the atrocities committed by the Israelis, I felt that as an American taxpayer and an American Jew, I had an obligation to speak out. If ordinary Germans living under total oppression can be held responsible for the crimes committed by the Nazis - because they did not speak out - how

could I speak for world Jewry. They clearly do not speak for me. So I have a duty to speak out."

Although only a secretary in a Manhattan business - she was educated in an ultra-orthodox Brooklyn girls' school - Ms Stern was encouraged in her campaign by Professor Noam Chomsky, one of America's foremost philosophers who is himself Jewish, and by the work of former Warsaw Ghetto survivor and chemistry professor, Dr Israel Shahak, whose history of Israel she quotes by heart.

"He wrote that 'any support of human rights in general by a Jew which does not include the support of human rights of non-Jews whose rights are being violated by the Jewish state is as deceitful as the support of human rights by a Stalinist. That really influenced me.'"

Ms Stern's father Chaim was a Hungarian Jew who also survived a concentration camp. "My mother was his cousin and they married in 1949. I was born seven years later," she says. "My parents are still alive and know my feelings about Israeli atrocities. They are sort of ambivalent about it. They believe I'm right in condemning it. But because of what they went through, they believe all the world is anti-semitic. So when there's a terrorist attack against the Israelis, they are unable to see it in the context of the Arab-Israeli dispute. I strongly condemn any terrorist attack. But my parents see it in terms of 'the Arabs are anti-semitic and that's why there's a terrorist attack'."

"I refuse to condemn my parents for these feelings. They see all Germans, for example, as Nazis - because, in their experience, they only met Nazis. And for most Palestinians, the only Jews they know of are the oppressors. The Palestinians in the refugee camps in Lebanon have probably never met a decent, moral Jew."

It was the killing of a Lebanese boy by a booby-trapped bomb that prompted the pro-Iranian Hizbollah - who blamed Israel for the incident - to launch rockets across the Lebanese border last April.

Israel responded with its three-week blitz on Lebanon. Israeli troops were planting booby-trap bombs inside the UN zone of Lebanon on 18 April when they came under mortar attack from Hizbollah men who were firing 600ft from the UN base at Qana. Israel claimed its subsequent 17-minute shelling of the refugees there was a mistake, but the UN concluded that it was not an error.

Ms Stern's attempt to persuade American journalists to mark the first anniversary of the bloodbath met with little more than indifference. Not a single mainstream American newspaper carried a paragraph - not even a brief news report on the UN-attended ceremony held in Lebanon to mark the first anniversary of the bloodbath.

Unlike Eva Stern, American journalists remained silent. ■ New York (AP) - The UN General Assembly voted yesterday to call on Israel to pay about \$1.7m (£1.04m) in damages for shelling the Qana peace-keeping base last year. The vote was 66-2 with 59 abstentions. Israel and the US voted against the measure.

'What I am doing is not courageous ... it is the decent thing to do. If ordinary Germans living under total oppression can be held responsible for the crimes of the Nazis - because they did not speak out - how much more responsible are we who live in a country where we have the freedom to speak out?'

much more responsible are we who live in a country where we have the freedom to speak out? If ordinary Germans were guilty for not speaking out, then surely we are also guilty in remaining silent about Qana. Because we don't live in fear of death squads. What I am doing is not courageous - it is the decent thing to do.

"If enough decent Germans had spoken out at the time, perhaps the Holocaust would not have happened."

Ms Stern does not draw false parallels between the Nazis and the Israeli army. "I'm not saying that the level of atrocities committed by the Israelis is on the same scale or in any way comparable to those of the Nazis. Of course not. But I know that I have paid as a taxpayer for the shells that rained down on Qana. And therefore if I'm silent, I'm no better than those Germans. Israel claims to be the representative of the Jewish people. It's important for people to know that they clearly do not



The UN base at Qana, in the Lebanon, where at least 109 people died. During their three-week blitz of the region, Israeli soldiers halted their shelling to commemorate Holocaust Day Photograph: AP

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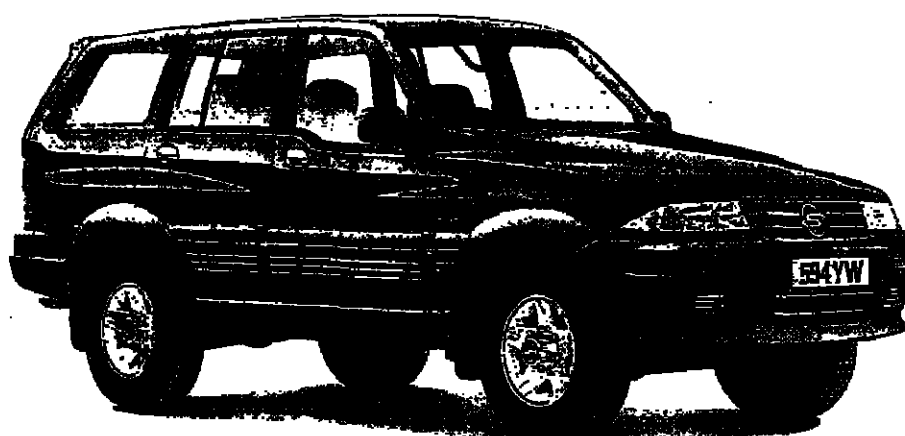
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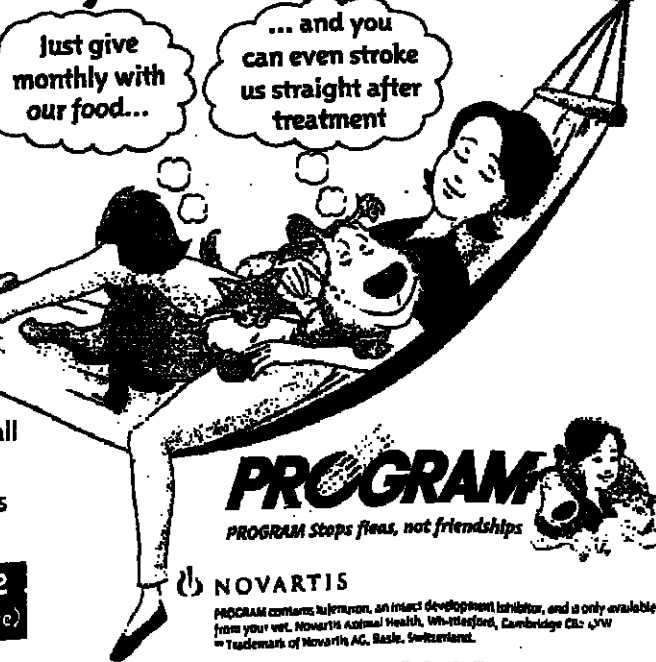
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We still don't know what Blairism means

It is curious that so many people voted for Tony Blair's Labour Party, that even more of them say they like his government, and yet it is so difficult to put a finger on what kind of creature that government actually is. In his first six weeks, the Prime Minister has surprised and pleased the country with his energy, freshness and sureness. And yet what has he said that defines the direction of the new administration? Nothing much that sticks in the mind beyond the rhetoric of newness. One way of thinking about this is to ask yourself, what is Blairism? Is there such a thing? What does it walk and talk like?

This week the *New Statesman* tried to assess the actions of the first 42 days against the categories of left, right and radical centre, arguing that Blairism is defined by the attempt to find a "Third Way" between left and right – a way that, for shorthand, believes in social justice within an open, competitive market economy. This is an intriguing idea, and the NS is surely right to presume that Blairism will in the end be defined by what the Government does, not by what Tony Blair ever says. But the NS, in analysing the actions of the Government thus far, understandably emerged somewhat puzzled.

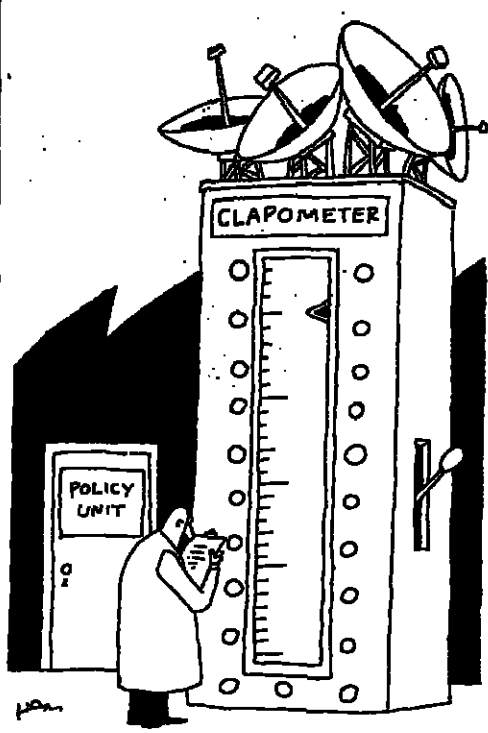
Left-wingers have concluded that the new government is not such a sell-out as they had feared. It has restored trade union rights at GCHQ, abolished the "primary purpose" rule for immigration, and banned landmines. Mean-

while, the starched fronts of the City welcomed Chancellor Gordon Brown's Mansion House speech as one that "could have been delivered by a Conservative", and a string of business leaders have been put in charge of key policy areas.

If this amounts to the Third Way, of which Mr Blair spoke at the socialist gathering in Malmö recently, then what are its organising principles? It is easy to be cynical, so let us for the sake of argument be cynical. The new government seems to be picking and choosing from the policies of left, right and centre according to how popular they are. If the focus groups want them to bash the "fat cats" of Camelot and the water companies, Chris Smith and John Prescott will do the left-wing thing. If the voter research demands tight control of spending or toughness on crime, then Gordon Brown and Jack Straw will do that.

When you put it like that, it is easy to see how untrue that portrait is. This government may prove to be a lot of things, but it is not yet cynical. (Mr Straw's repeal of the most arbitrary and unfair aspects of immigration law is, for example, hardly a vote-winner.) The new government is best defined by a kind of principled populism. And populism has much to commend it, as well as some obvious dangers.

Perhaps Tony Blair's greatest achievement so far has been to teach the Labour Party to speak English. The most dramatic change in the past six weeks has been in the quality of the dialogue



between government and the people. Labour fought the election with billboards which made a series of direct statements. Young offenders will be punished. NHS waiting lists will be shorter. Class sizes will be smaller. Income tax rates will not rise. More jobs for young people. These were credible promises which will, in all likelihood, be delivered. Compare the simplicity of those pledges, too artless to be called slogans, with the theological debate raging in the Conservative Party about the degree of absoluteness of a commitment not to join the euro. Unlike the Tories, Labour is engaged in a democratic conversation with the electorate in a language everyone can understand.

Yesterday, Mr Blair added to the after-sales service with a question-and-answer session in Worcester, home of the female floating voter targeted so unsuccessfully by the Tories. It is an impressive commitment, to speak directly to the people once a month, and the protests of Westminster traditionalists only make the Prime Minister's point. Of course, he has bypassed and belittled his accountability to the House of Commons. We are profoundly unshocked. Mr Blair still answers questions once a week in Parliament, but no prime minister has ever answered questions from the voters themselves in a regular forum like yesterday's. Yes, we know and Mr Blair knows, and Mr Blair's advisers know that this is a forum that suits him, that he performs at his best in such circumstances.

Yesterday he did not disappoint: he came across as persuasive, sincere and human. And, yes, there are limits to the number of questioners and questions and to the fullness of his replies. But that does not detract from the significance of such direct democratic communication.

Mr Blair has learnt well the lessons of recent American politics. One of the books that was influential in recreating the Democratic Party in the US was *Speaking American*, by David Kusek. Learning the lessons of the failed Democratic presidential campaigns of the Eighties, it urged a "new populism" which identified the party with the common-sense values of mainstream America, instead of only addressing the downtrodden. This meant using simple language. It worked for Bill Clinton, and it worked for Mr Blair, but Mr Blair also learnt from Mr Clinton's mistakes in office, and has not tried to push through unpopular left-wing policies in his honeymoon period.

Hence the insistence that "we won as New Labour, we will govern as New Labour". But populism, while a refreshing draught of democracy in our tired political system, is value-free, and it is by its values that Blairism will be remembered. So are sketchy still: a little liberal but only so far as it goes; moralistic, definitely; technocratic, as far as it is possible to discern. Meanwhile, renewing the democratic conversation between government and governed is not a bad start for a new "ism".

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Bomber' postage stamps: a flight into controversy

Sir: The "obnoxious" actions of RAF bombers, depicted on the new Royal Mail stamps which Eamonn Molloy and Nick Hunt object to (Letters, 11 June), helped to ensure that they and their like are now free men.

The compatriots of their friends in Germany were fully behind Hitler when he was winning. Hitler could not have achieved so much without the full co-operation of the German people. Mr Molloy and Mr Hunt would not be enjoying the freedom of education and speech they now have had it not been for the sacrifice made by millions of men and women throughout the world. I survived the war but am still suffering the effects of German barbarity whilst a prisoner of war.

People like Mr Molloy and Mr Hunt should keep their comments to themselves, at least until my generation has all gone.
HAROLD CROOKES
Swinon, South Yorkshire

Sir: I suppose it was inevitable that some people, in this case Eamonn Molloy and Nick Hunt, would find a reason to object to the new stamps illustrating famous aircraft (Letters, 11 June).

The name Dresden is immediately quoted by all those who seem to feel that we have something to apologise for in our pursuit of the air war 1939-45. An all-out war (not started by us) became a war of survival, and having got involved, however reluctantly, there is only one way of fighting a war, and that is to win.

It is worth remembering also that before Dresden there was the bombing of Guernica, Warsaw, Rotterdam, Coventry, London and many other cities. Perhaps the range of stamps should be extended to include others such as the Heinkel 111, Dornier 17 and Junkers 88, then Mr Molloy and Mr Hunt would be able to write to their friends in Dresden with a reminder of

something which perhaps they would prefer to forget.

A J ALLAM
Old Coulsdon, Surrey

Sir: The Architects of the Air stamps do not celebrate war, rather the great partnerships between constructors and designers that created such unique aircraft. Each plane on the stamps was revolutionary in its own way and the Architects of the Air were the trail-blazers for today's modern designs. The Spitfire, Lancaster, Mosquito, Meteor and Hunter shown on the stamps represent different aspects of great aviation design styles and show how design has evolved from the propeller to the jet age.

The stamps are issued to mark the 50th anniversary of the death of Roy Chadwick, designer of the Lancaster. ADAM NOVAK
Director and General Manager
Royal Mail National
London EC2

Astronomical future of Greenwich

Sir: Your feature "A closed subject?" (10 June) discusses the future of the Royal Greenwich Observatory, and the decision presented to John Battle, the minister for science, about whether to close one of these historic institutions, and if so which.

Unfortunately, Professor Rowan-Robinson (Letters, 12 June) confuses the issue with thinking which fails to take account of recent developments and innovations in the subject.

The issue of which Royal Observatory to concentrate on has indeed been debated, but never openly, and the aborted Prior Options exercise of last year promised at least an open process with full information being presented and a reasonable timescale for a considered conclusion. Professor Rowan-Robinson refers indirectly to the Hough report of 1995, which did indeed recommend that astronomy technology should be concentrated in Edinburgh, but this report was rejected by the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC) of the time as not having investigated the issue in sufficient depth. A similarly constituted panel this year has been given an equally short timescale, and though its conclusions are secret it may be that, not knowing the full history of the debate, it has endorsed the conclusions of the previous panel.

Professor Rowan-Robinson states that astronomy should be concentrated in Edinburgh since the future lies in the infra-red region of the spectrum. In 1991, a report to the National Research Council of the US (the Bahcall report) described the decade from 1990 to 2000 as "the Decade of the Infra-Red". But that decade is nearly over, and the main discoveries of the infra-red have been made. Are we, as the second strongest country in the subject, to spend the next decade simply trying to catch up with what the Americans have already done?

We should instead concentrate on the new technologies of the future – optical interferometry, adaptive optics, multi-mirror and segmented telescopes, use of optical fibres, and cheap and cost-effective telescopes. In all of these fields the Royal Greenwich Observatory has a prominent position.

Although I left the RGO a year ago I work closely with RGO staff, so I should declare an interest here. I work on a project to deliver low-cost but first-class telescopes to the UK market and for export. My project requires the expertise of the RGO in order to compete on the world stage. The Astronomer Royal is right to call on the Minister and on PPARC to consider this issue more fully, and to look to the future rather than to the past.

Dr DAVID CARTER
Project Scientist, New Generation
Astronomical Telescopes Project
Liverpool John Moores University

Blair needs to be interested in institutions

Sir: If the European Union is to become a citizens' Europe rather than a bureaucrats' Europe it is essential that Tony Blair and Robin Cook overcome their distaste for institution-building.

The EU has to meet two tests: effectiveness and democracy. Both are compromised by the failure to clarify who does what and why. That is why you are right to argue for reform towards a "simpler, more understandable and responsive political system" ("Blair's chance to lead in Europe", 11 June). To the extent that the Treaty of Amsterdam makes modest progress towards that aim, it ought to be welcomed, although I expect few celebratory street parties in my neighbourhood.

If more of our citizens actually understood the current set-up, they might well challenge rather than approve the new government's continuation of the old one's fondness for state-to-state co-operation and intergovernmental

ways of working. The so-called "Third Pillar", in which the 15 home offices/ministries secretly negotiate arrangements on visas, policing, immigration, etc, has been justly described as a "bureaucrats' playground".

The letter from Tim Spencer MEP (11 June) illustrated another reason for taking an interest in institutions. The EU's ability to ensure the security of our continent and its citizens – not just in the traditional military sense, but also in responding to global threats stemming from environmental degradation and political collapse – depends on a capability for effective common action.

I long for a clear, transparent European constitution based on democracy and openness. It is all very well for Tony Blair to despise institutions, but he won't get a real people's Europe without paying them some attention.
SARAH LUDFORD
London N1

New mood inspires singing

Sir: David Lister twice mentions the fact that the Crouch End Festival Choir is made up of amateurs: "psychotherapists, city workers, shopkeepers and factory workers" (report, 11 June). Is he surprised?

Music-making, particularly singing, attracts enthusiasts of all ages from every part of society. Choral singing actively encourages teamwork, individual self-confidence, physical stamina and intellectual challenge; in fact, most of the aspects of social achievement promoted by our new government. I cannot imagine a more appropriate way for the Government to express the new mood of the nation than to promote music-making of all kinds in schools and communities around the country.

ANNE DANIEL
Secretary
Esterhazy Chamber Choir
Lewes, East Sussex

Flying gin bottles are a waste of space

Sir: I have just returned from Chicago clutching my bottle of duty-free gin, labelled "Imported from England".

This must be one of thousands of bottles of spirits that have been needlessly flown across the Atlantic to the US, at considerable expense, only so that people like myself can get a few pence off the cost of a bottle and then fly it straight back.

Why could I not order the duty-free goods I require as I leave Chicago, who then notify Manchester of what to have ready for me? Or why can't I buy the duty-free on arrival into the UK, to pass the time while I am waiting at baggage reclaim?

The whole system seems to be geared to the needless transportation of duty-free goods all over the world, wasting money, fuel and aircraft hold space, and contributing more to carbon dioxide emissions.

Isn't it about time we introduced some common sense into this arrangement?
PHIL HILL
Leeds

LETTER from THE EDITOR

Richard Lloyd Parry's revelation of head-hunting by Dayak tribesmen earlier this week was a great scoop – what he rightly described as "an ethnic war of scarcely imaginable savagery, fought according to ancient principles of black magic, between inhabitants of the world's fourth largest nation". His explanation of the political and economic reasons for the conflict, covered up by the Indonesian government, was impeccable. How strange, then, that in yesterday's Letters column Richard finds himself accused by two campaigners, Stephen Cory of Survival International and Frances Carr of the Campaign for Ecological Justice in Indonesia, of being reactionary and unconsciously racist, and of stereotyping and misrepresenting the Dayaks.

So they didn't indulge in cannibalism and head-hunting of the Madurese, then? Well yes, they did, but it seems that revealing the fact is a throwback to the "unashamed cultural prejudice of the Victorian era" and "potentially undermines years of work by tribes and their supporters to persuade the world that tribes are no more 'savage' or 'primitive' than the rest of us..." (Cory). Though head-hunting is shocking, Carr adds, "The Dayaks are a peaceful people who are struggling to survive in their tribal lands..."

Where do we start? No reader of this paper can be unaware of the foul and brutal behaviour of the Indonesian regime, or of the reasons for the conflict – partly because Lloyd Parry himself has been reporting them. Yes, Westerners can also behave like sadistic tribal killers – witness the reports from Algeria recently. Yet, as archaeological evidence suggests that early Britons also indulged in cannibalism – as did Europeans and Russians during the great traumas of this century. All these facts have featured in the paper during the spring.

But – Hell's teeth – none of that can be used as a reason to downplay an outbreak of head-hunting and human heart-eating (or "cultural practices" as I should apparently call them). This is mad stuff – political correctness carried far beyond satire. Where once ignorant

Europeans thought tribal peoples little better than monkeys, some breast-beating campaigners are now close to an inverted error, thinking of surviving indigenous peoples as ecological angels, more virtuous than fallen, corrupt or "civilised" peoples. There is such a thing as progress. And it does involve giving up cannibalism, in Borneo just as in Surrey.

Finally, thoughts on two front-page pictures. When I saw Wednesday's paper, I thought some malign picture desk operative had decided to smear William Hague, favourite to take over the Tory leadership. After much rumour-mongering around Westminster, Hague (as we report today) has said

It seems that revealing cannibalism and head-hunting is a throwback to the 'unashamed cultural prejudice of the Victorian era'

publicly he is not gay. But in our picture, the MP who manages to be boyish and bald simultaneously, is clearly shown wearing bright scarlet lipstick. So, smear? No: I am assuming it was "something that happens in the printing". Then, the following day, we spent part of the evening agonising over a picture of Sean McNally, the Belfast thief who has just had his leg amputated after a republican "kneecapping". The picture was, frankly, hard to look at. But it told a brutal truth about what is still regarded on this side of the water as a rather tedious, second-order story – "just another kneecapping... just another punishment beating". In the end, I decided the sewn-up meat of McNally's leg was simply too much for a main front-page picture. So we reduced it. Unfortunately, in the cropping of the picture, most of the wound disappeared, leaving simply a dejected-looking man in a chair. That's the explanation.

Andrew Marr

QUOTE UNQUOTE

Feel-good factors are fragile and illusory things at the best of times. It suits the media to tell us that we're feeling much better as a nation because Tony Blair smiles a lot. Euphoria is nice but reality is better – Lisa Jardine, *Professor of English at the University of London*

Often people use feminism as a dirty word. To me it's a compliment – Anna Coote, *special adviser to Harriet Harman, Minister for Women*

This is not a time for gloating – Ann Widdecombe, *former prisons minister, when asked about her erstwhile boss Michael Howard coming bottom of the Tory leadership poll*

In the past we had none of the nonsense that has been going on here for the last six weeks. We did not take anyone out to lunch or drinks. We thought they were capable of making their own minds up – Sir Edward Heath, *former prime minister, on his party's leadership election*

I'm very frivolous, impatient and impulsive. I'd rather read cheap thrillers than Shakespeare – Sir John Gielgud, *actor*

To know that the charts, which are supposed to be the representation of popular taste, have been discredited in whatever way is a great disappointment. It means there's no Santa Claus. You can't believe in what you used to love – Paul Giamatti, *broadcaster, on allegations that the pop charts are hyped*

Nutritional standards for children

Sir: It is very encouraging that the Government has acknowledged that poverty has a direct link to ill-health (report, 11 June). This is the first step towards tackling the real problem of health inequality in the UK.

Save the Children's recent report *Out of the Frying Pan* clearly demonstrated the problems families on a low income face feeding their children. The Government's announcement that national nutritional standards for school meals will be enforced is to be welcomed. This will help many low-income families who face a daily struggle to give their children a healthy diet.

A full assessment should now be carried out to determine the level of benefit required to provide a healthy diet. In the meantime, the introduction of "top-up" benefits would help to cover the cost of meals during the school holidays.

Tessa Jowell, the minister of public health, is right to pay attention to the effect of nutrition on children's health, and to acknowledge that it is only one area of concern. Many are only one area of concern. Many are suffering the cumulative effects of poor diet, bad housing, high incidence of accidents and infection and a greater risk of homelessness. A radical rethink of policy is necessary. This must be focused on children to prevent the effects of poverty from lasting a lifetime.

MIKE AARONSON
Director-General, Save the Children
London SE5

Polenta – a delicacy eaten by magpies

Sir: It is only to be expected that those in the outer suburbs who are still eating sun-dried tomatoes (so very Eighties) would be unable to appreciate the joys of polenta (Letters, 13 June).

Charlie Burgess should realise that here in Islington, where it certainly does feel as though the waves of the Mediterranean are lapping on the shores of Upper Street, the only true way to eat this delicacy is to let it cool as a flat slab, cut it into pieces and then gently fry in olive oil.

If the wet polenta has already been cooked in stock and then a little garlic and rosemary or perhaps some pecorino or purple basil pesto stirred in, so much the better. Or it can be topped with some chargrilled vegetables and buffalo mozzarella. If it makes him feel better, Mr Burgess

could even stir in some of those tough little red things he likes...
TERRY KIRBY
London N19

Sir: I fully sympathise with Charlie Burgess's assessment of polenta (letter, 13 June) and his latitude theory.

After our own incredibly monotonous experience (in an Old Labour household, with static property values) we can report that mice out of 10 garden birds turned up their beaks at the substance. The only species that showed any enthusiasm was the magpie, but it would be cruel to draw any symbolic conclusion based on covetousness.
MARK WALMSLEY
Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire

Bogus interpretation of Queen Mary

Sir: I see that "Planners go to war against the Queen of Scots" (11 June).

So should art historians. The old chestnut portrait you reproduce of "Queen Mary" is as bogus as any naïf Disneyesque historical pleasure-dome. The picture itself is at Montecarlo, from the National Portrait Gallery, and is a lovely Elizabethan portrait, but of an unknown lady – a prime example of

the Northern Renaissance from which the punters are said to run away.

May the Lord preserve us from tatty Interpretation Centres, Theme Parks, Experiences, New Art History and all their ghastly anydne kin. Meat not gruel, please.
CHRISTOPHER FOLEY
Director
Lane Fine Art
London SW10

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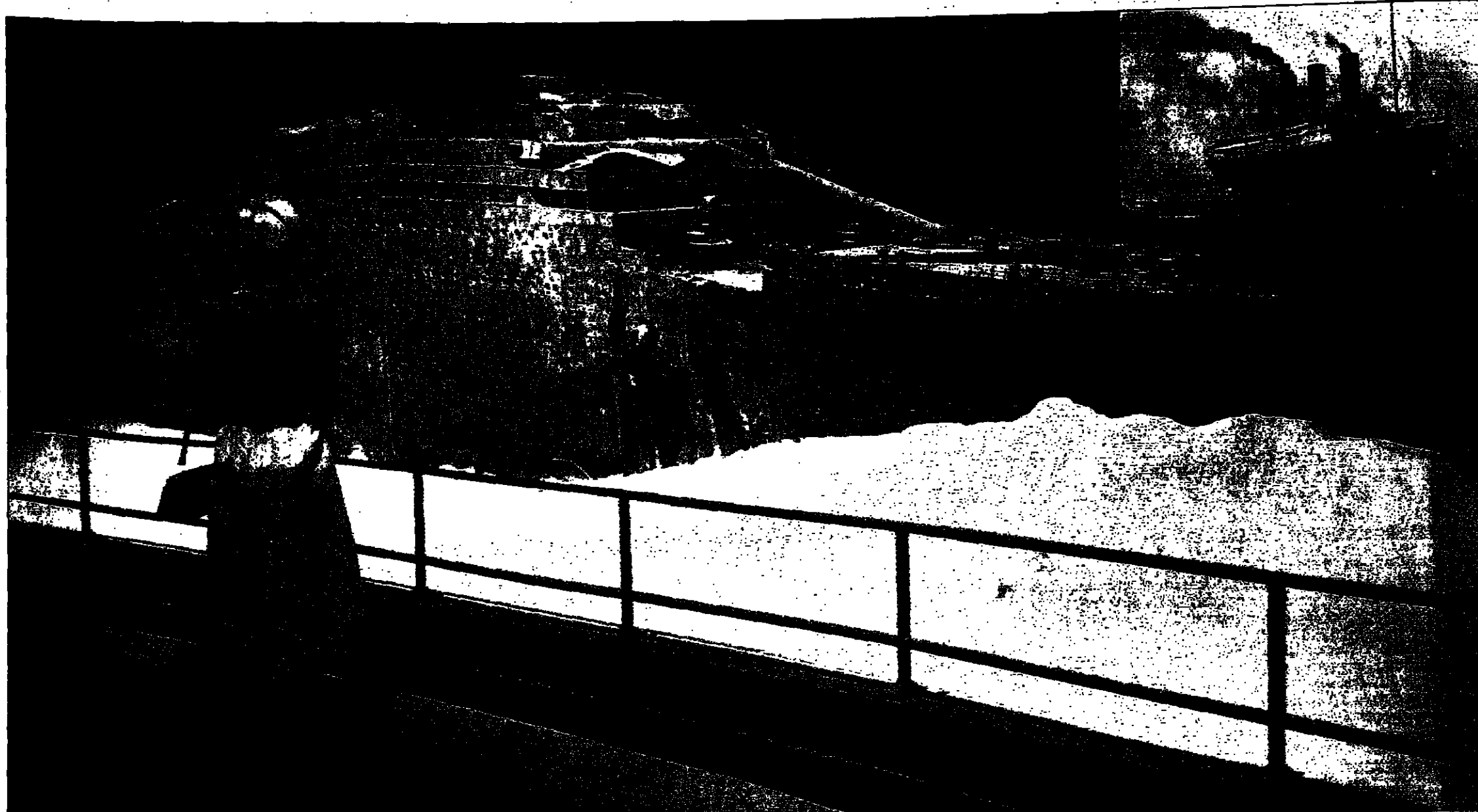
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A revolution
war with itself



the saturday story

From the sea bed to the Hollywood Hills, the power of the 'Titanic' legend endures, providing vicarious sensations for an age and culture bereft of news.
By Reggie Nadelson



The bottom liner: an exhibition in Memphis sells 'Titanic' cups, blankets and bathrobes, and red and white 'Titanic' inner tubes for the beach or pool. Inset: the real ship

Photograph: Sipa Press

The disaster to die for

"Well, I hear *Titanic's* up to two hundred million," someone says, smacking his lips. I'm at a dinner party in the Hollywood Hills, and there is nothing Hollywood loves as much as a big disaster movie except a movie that's a really big disaster. "No kidding," someone replies, sipping some lovely local California Merlot and eating spaghetti while below us, in the canyons of paranoia, lights twinkle on and the smog fires up a gorgeous sunset. "No kidding? I heard two fifty," says someone else. "Yeah, and what about the disaffected cook on the film crew who put LSD, or maybe it was Angel Dust, into the food and everyone went nuts for at least a week. Did you hear that one?"

It is the eighth (eighth!) celluloid version of the *Titanic* we're talking about. For this one, they built an entire studio down in Mexico. This one has Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet as the leads. James Cameron, the director of the *Titanic*, the movie, is already being compared to Captain El Smith, skipper of the *Titanic*, the ship.

Already the movie's release has been postponed. Already people are licking their lips as they speculate that *Titanic*, the movie, could make *Waterworld*, by comparison, resemble a drowned

rubber duck. Call it Titanimania. It's not just the movie, either. The Sunday before last, *Titanic*, the musical (\$10m-worth of musical that is, which opened on Broadway after nearly sinking from sight) won a Tony award. In Memphis, Tennessee, there is a huge new exhibition of artefacts salvaged by RMS Titanic Inc. which has exclusive rights to the site where the liner rests and which, having taken tourists 400 miles off the Newfoundland coast to watch the action at \$6,000 each, is now selling pieces of *Titanic* coal the size of a nut for 30 bucks. In the past year or so, there have been a dozen books, not least a cookbook, *Last Dinner on the Titanic*. "Titanic: Adventure Out of Time" is a CD-Rom in which players try to escape from the ship; in one scene, corpses float by a porthole and there's the sound of hysterical screaming; and did I mention the CD of *Music As Heard Aboard the Fateful Voyage* featuring "The Merry Widow Waltz"?

There isn't space to list the comic books, the games, the magazine articles, the hundreds of thousands, the millions of entries on the Internet, especially my favourite website (or is it home page?) titled "Disasterama".

The *Titanic* might have been a British disaster, but it plays great on this side of the pond where we like our disasters big. We like them big and we like

them ripe, ready for the making of myth and the making of movies. Every child knows the facts about the *Titanic*: How it was the largest ship ever for its day, one-sixth of a mile long, 46,000 tons. The safest ship. The most luxurious ship. How it was the biggest thing that moved on the planet probably since the dinosaurs.

A technological miracle, it was built by the White Star Line to compete for transatlantic passengers with the faster Cunard, but it was also built just to prove man could do it. It was the stuff of myth even before it sank.

When it set sail on 10 April, 1912, it was a microcosm of Edwardian society – the millionaires in dazzling first-class accommodation, all stained-glass windows and lobster for dinner. In steerage were the immigrants who, headed for America to start a new life, provided a whole other seam for folklore. (At New York's Ellis Island Museum of Immigrants there's a commemorative plaque.) Two days later, the *Titanic* encountered an iceberg 20 storeys high and within three hours it sank. There weren't enough lifeboats: 1,500 people died. Women and children first. The band played. Before the news reached dry land, the *Titanic* had become myth.

It had everything: it still does: technology, hubris, class, money, romance, death. There were plenty of dead people but it was somehow a bloodless

terror. With the recent salvage operations there are also the details that make the thing so poignant.

At the Memphis exhibition are unopened bottles of champagne (1880 vintage), a bracelet with Amy spelled out in diamonds, a battered jacket with the name Broome on it – it belonged to an assistant steward named Athol Broome. There's china and crystal, a chandelier, intact, and a jar of olives, still green. There are letters, and brushes and combs.

There are scale models of the ship and sections of rusted bow, there is a panorama of sky and stars with railings and empty lifeboat hooks.

When the *Titanic* sank, you could read anything into it and everyone did: There were feminist interpretations as the early feminists declared it a sign of men's ineptitude. Preachers saw in it God's anger – with man's pride, with feminism, with John Jacob Astor's divorce. "Black man oughta shout for joy. Never lost a girl or either a boy," Leadbelly sang, considering a warning to racists. And of course, coming the same year that Scott died trying to get to the South Pole, it seemed obvious that 1912 was the end of British infallibility and all it signified. There was a kind of millennial inevitability about it. As the *Titanic* sank, Captain Smith admonished his men, "Be British."

Why now? Why here? The recent

evidence that the *Titanic* sank because of six little holes in its side instead of one big gash doesn't explain it. True, the disaster genre has been a boom business from the time Bulwer-Lytton published *The Last Days of Pompeii* and Europeans rushed to visit the site, turning it into the first disaster theme park. And there's always been the catharsis, the feel-good factor in the face of disaster. I'm alive. Lucky me.

Disasters are big business now – the spring has been littered with disaster movies, not least *Volcano* in which most of California is covered with hot lava or, as the advertising promo put it "The Coast is toast". And maybe with the end of the Cold War, we yearn for something to unite us, to make us feel it's US against THEM. *Independence Day* gave us the first alien baddies for years, (after a generation of sweeties like *ET*). Asteroids are hot on television now. Instead of comics, in the '90s we got asteroids.

Or maybe, at a time when news is dead, we long for a virtual punch on the nose to make us feel something. "There hasn't been any news since the Gulf War," someone said to me recently, and it's true. News has almost entirely disappeared from American network television and, therefore, so far as most of us know, disappeared altogether. These are isolationist times. Self-satisfied, in-turning with a boom economy. Nervy times, though, the end of the century in sight. There's a millennial unease, a low-grade paranoia brought on by the constant hum of stuff that lulls us, the white noise of infotainment and factoids, non-news and tab TV. The news as once reported by the great and the good is now retailed by talk show hosts and ex-

politicians. The few remaining journalists, the old guard like Peter Jennings on ABC, have tossed in the towel; instead of news, there are featurettes: "Your money, your choice" is an ABC mainstay.

On any evening newscast, you might spot the country formerly known as Zaire somewhere in the second half. Otherwise, you're more likely to find stories about health. And weather. Lots of weather. Floods in North Dakota. Tornadoes in Tennessee. Thank God for weather and that America has plenty of it. Which brings me back to the business of disasters.

In lieu of events, we've become event freaks and a good disaster is a titillating wake-up call. What better than a re-run of the most perfect disaster of them all? The *Titanic* has been mined by myth-makers and movie makers and folklorists for so long, it's practically bred in the bone. Even at summer camp we used to sing a song that went, "It was sad, it was sad, it was sad when the great ship went down to the bottom of the... uncles and aunts, itty bitty children lost their pants... And in the gift shop at the *Titanic* Exhibition in Memphis, Tennessee, you can buy *Titanic* and White Star memorabilia: cups, blankets, bathrobes, and for the beach or swimming pool, red and white *Titanic* inner tubes.

So up in the Hollywood Hills, we drink wine and eat pasta and talk disaster. The house we're in is on stilts, three stories high. The next big earthquake will spit us out like cherry pips. But what consumes us, what holds us all in thrall is the safe adventure with a one-way ticket, the crisis in a theme park, the celluloid *Titanic* that, having gone down once in 1912, can go down over and over again.

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jo brand's week

Oh blimey. Apparently, according to two psychologists in Australia, pre-menstrual syndrome is a myth. Thus, I'm sure, making many women wonder why, for a few days a month, they are so irritable or weepy. I suffer from this myth to the extent that, one day a month, I am very pathetic and miserable and on another just cross and on a short fuse. In fact, in the past, the angry day has enabled me to vent my feelings in a way that normally I'd never have dared. For example, I was once wandering round the West End when three blokes in a white van regaled me with the immortal words, "Look at the size of those tits!" Normally I would have slunk away seething, but owing to my bad temper, I walked up to the van and pulled one of their windscreen wipers off. The look on their faces was a joy to behold. Good job I didn't have to answer for my behaviour in an Australian court.

The new Minister for Women in Scotland is a bloke and so will have to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous piss-taking. When he

announced his appointment to a host of prominent Scottish women last weekend, a member of the audience said that because he seemed so embarrassed, in the end, she felt quite sorry for him. But that's most women for you, we're so sensitive. Perhaps we should bear in mind that a woman in an important post doesn't always fulfil her promise. (Margaret Thatcher, for example). Still, Tony Blair has missed an important opportunity to convince us of his commitment to women. What's next? Garry Bushell at the Arts Council?

I have always assumed that being an RSPCA inspector was a rewarding job which earned you respect. This week an RSPCA inspector is being rehoused after threats by hooded men who held a knife to his throat and smashed up his van. I suppose that if individuals are prepared to treat animals appallingly, they probably would not hesitate to do the same to people. I wish sometimes that all these psychopaths who make everyone else's lives a misery could be put on an island to battle it out in *A Lord of the*

Flies sort of way. We could all do with a break from them.

Sometimes on tour, one humps into performers who are appearing in other shows, and so in Cheltenham on Tuesday night I got a call in my hotel room from a member of staff saying the one and only Lionel Blair was in the bar and he wanted to say hello! I have never met Lionel Blair before, but I have always thought he seemed like a nice bloke. And sure enough, he was. He very cheerfully had a chat on the phone with one of my gang's mum and coped admirably with their somewhat tipsy verbal onslaught. We had an interesting chat about the gap between traditional performers and the new mob, and Lionel Blair illustrates

how one can bridge the gap between the old and the new. (At the age of nearly 40, it's nice to be described as "new"). He is neither resentful nor threatened and has moved with the times. Pity some of his contemporaries haven't.

In the next few months, I am going to learn how to be a rally driver and take part in the RAC Round Britain rally for charity, with John, our tour manager. In Cheltenham, we got to meet our rally car because it is maintained by a bloke called Gary who, coincidentally, is a stage manager at the theatre where we were performing. There were some worries that, as it is quite a small car, neither John (tall, big muscles, long legs) nor myself (short, wide,

big bum) would fit into the specially designed bucket seats. Thankfully we managed to force ourselves in, in a Laurel and Hardy sort of way. Mission accomplished. Now we just have to drive the bloody thing.

The fears many of us have about the danger of employing private security firms to be responsible for prisoners, many of whom are emotionally disturbed, were realised this week when Securicor staff left a man hanging in a cell for 10 minutes because they thought he was faking a suicide attempt. Even when the man's barrister insisted on some action, bureaucracy took over and the staff would not do anything until their supervisor arrived. This shocking lapse of professionalism and adequate care, I fear, is only the tip of the iceberg, especially as far as those prisoners with mental health problems are concerned. With the vast majority of the general public having the attitude that those who are mentally ill are "putting it on", untrained private security staff cannot be relied upon to keep people safe.

ملكا من الاصل

Grammarians weep! The bell tolls for 'whom'

Crimes of violence are increasing – and not just those against the person. It may not hit the headlines, but English grammar is being subjected to sustained assaults which, in the aggressive parlance of the day, are rearranging its features. It is time the silent, and decreasing, majority protested.

We can overlook petty infringements like split infinitives or the use of conjunctions to begin sentences. In any case the Oxford University Press has now confirmed that those usages do not have a criminal persona after all.

Nor can there be much regret over what might be regarded as organic changes in the language. For example, it seems fairly natural for the likes of "stadia" and "referenda" to have become "stadiums" and "referendums". Likewise the compression of "under way" into "underway" probably has respectable precedents. Respect for equal opportunities dictates acceptance of the demise of feminine nouns – for example actresses are apparently now actors. It is possible even to adjust to topsy-turvy alterations such as that whereby people now find decisions are "down" and not "up" to them. All those changes are born of ignorance but in their case ignorance is almost bliss.

What do seem objectionable are the attacks on grammar by the ignoramuses who wield the literary equivalent of a baseball bat. Some of the miscreants can be found at the addresses of tabloid newspapers, advertising agencies or WIA OAA (Parliament). Others, alas, come from what were believed to be better homes, such as the BBC and the broadsheets. Whoever the instigators, the sad thing is that the many weaker brethren among us tend to pick up their bad habits.

As a result of their misdeeds, it now appears that no distinction is to be made between "may" and "might", between "shall" and "will", between "either" and "each", between "criterion" and "criteria" and between "phenomenon" and "phenomena". Similarly, "less" is to be used where "fewer" should be found. We shall in future be saying "Can we?" when we mean "May we?" and the word "whom", if not already buried, soon will be, with "who" taking its place, regardless of what case applies. Something which can only be "unique" will be described as "very unique". "Refute" already seems to have been bludgeoned into a new meaning of "reject" instead of "disprove" and the spelling of "chose" is gradually being twisted into "chose" while conversely "lose" is becoming "loose".

Adverbs are being repeatedly knocked down and stamped on with adjectives, so that, for example, things are now done "quicker" instead of "more quickly".

The gerund is being robbed of its proper descriptors; thus we now see expressions like "him doing" something instead of "his doing".

From the gerund to apostrophes, components of our language are succumbing to attacks by the ignorant. An angry and despairing Walter Roberts seeks a way out

Then we have the crude battering of object into subject as in "Me and my mate ..." (followed by a verb) instead of "My mate and I ...". As if in atonement for that aberration, we see ludicrous attempts at self-effacement by the use of "myself" when "I" or "me", as the case may be, is what is meant.

Apostrophes suffer multiple sins of omission and commission. Sometimes they are scattered like confetti with no regard to their relevance, sometimes they are left out incorrectly. "It's" instead of "its", meaning belonging to it, is a classic example of the misdeeds.

Phrases are not immune from the assaults of the obscurantists. "As far as (someone/something) is/are concerned" is being sneakily deprived of its "is/are concerned" element. A "neither ... or" has been perpetrated on the radio and in the press. And hope has presumably gone for "different from" after its pummeling into "different to", or, worse, "different than".

The extent of the mischief is evident even in slang. A derogatory term now in vogue is "toe-rag", roughly meaning a bit of a hooligan. What in heaven's

name is a toe-rag – something grape-treaders use when they step out of the vat? The real derivation is probably from "tuareg", reputed to be a fearsome Arab brigand. Our unconscious neologists, sensing an insulting connotation but having no concept of the real meaning or spelling, will have proceeded blithely to write it phonetically. That is remarkable enough but what is worse is that others, who should have known better, have blindly adopted the misinterpretation without thinking to question the word's meaning or validity.

These transgressions against the language are vexing enough for the concerned layman. They must be agony for the academics of English who will be aware of many more.

Periodically the wail goes up about the near-illiteracy of senior school pupils and university entrants. Maybe they are smarter than we think. Why bother learning grammatical skills only to discover later that "tis folly to be wise?"

Education ministers will no doubt claim to be as tough as their home affairs colleagues on crime and the causes of crime but things just seem to get worse. Perhaps we should simply accept that anything goes now as far as the language is concerned (or should that just be "as far as the language"?). And look on the bright side – that the funding crisis in education could be eased rapidly and substantially by putting an end to the teaching of English. We pedants could always emigrate to some other part of Europe safe in the knowledge that violence against English there would be much less pronounced, in both senses of the word.



In bloom: a Joyce enthusiast recites from 'Ulysses' on Bloomsday, at Bewleys in Dublin

Eamonn Farrell/Photocall; Hulton Getty

moanday, tearsday, wailsday, thumpday, frightday, shatterday. Bloomsday

by Boyd Tonkin

In the early 18th century, Jonathan Swift invented the Little Endians, who went to war over the best way to crack open a boiled egg. Nearly three centuries later, James Joyce – another great Dubliner – still cooks up quarrels over minute details that look just as crazy to outsiders. Next week, to coincide with "Bloomsday" in the 75th anniversary year of the novel's publication, Picador will publish a new and controversial "reader's edition" of Joyce's masterpiece, *Ulysses*. Already the scholarly insults are flying "like a shot off a shovel" (as *Ulysses* puts it). In the *London Review of Books*, Lawrence Rainey – a Joyce specialist from Yale University – accuses Picador's editor Danis Rose of demagoguery and despotism, and damps the project as a "self-aggrandising fantasy".

Ulysses is set on 16 June 1904, when Joyce first dated his future wife, Nora Barnacle. The virtuoso comic epic maps 24 hours in the life of two Dubliners, Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus, on to the episodic plan of Homer's *Odyssey*. On Monday, the day will be celebrated by Joycean covens around the world. Enthusiasts will trace Leopold and Stephen's route across Dublin, while a mass in Sydney will mark the passing of the fictional Paddy Dignam, whose funeral Bloom attends.

Disputes over the book's text have dogged it from the moment that Joyce's American patron Sylvia Beach issued the first edition of 1,000 copies in Paris in 1922. Typeset by a printer in Dijon, it had more than 2,000 misprints. Joyce constantly meddled with his various manuscripts as he wrote the book in Zurich and Trieste from 1916 onwards. Even publication failed to stop his tinkering. The result has proved to be a minefield – and also a goldmine – for academic duellists ever since.

Novelist and academic David Lodge comments that "Joyce said he had written a book that would keep the professors busy for 100 years. There's a pedantry of genius in *Ulysses*. That's why it attracts rather obsessive, tunnel-visioned scholars. It's rather like a gigantic crossword puzzle in three dimensions." The critic Valentine Cunningham says that non-

religious critics can "find a post-theological satisfaction" wrangling over commas and full stops. "*Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* have become the Bible of modern literature."

So why should non-believers care? Lodge maintains that "no other book of the 20th century has got so close to rendering in words what cognitive scientists call *qualia* – the minutiae of feelings, sensations and emotions". To later writers, he

might have been in the author's mind. As a result, the fractious world of Joyce studies is set for its fiercest battle in years. In 1984, the Munich-based Joyce scholar Hans Walter Gabler published a critical edition that set aficionados at one another's throats for years. Using computers to create a "continuous manuscript text" of all Joyce's drafts prior to the first printed edition, Gabler claimed 5,000 improvements

to "Culler" and a cyclist called "Thrift" really existed. Gabler even left the name off the Gaelic toast *Sláinte* – part of what John Kild condemned as his high-handed indifference to Irish culture. Conferences and journals hosted furious exchanges between rival camps. As Danis Rose recalls, "Every one had their own point of view, although not everybody knew what they were meant to be looking at." Gabler was vilified, but never entirely defeated.

Most famously, the doyen of Joyce studies – his great biographer, Richard Ellmann – first endorsed and then rejected one crucial change. Late in *Ulysses*, Stephen sees an apparition of his dead mother and asks her to name the "word known to all men". In a much earlier passage from the so-called "Rosenbach Manuscript" – a fair copy that Joyce sold for ready cash to a wealthy Irish-American lawyer, John Quinn – that pivotal word is identified as "love". At a congress in Monaco, Ellmann backtracked from his previous support for this addition.

Many experts treat the Rosenbach version as an "authorial fake" which was dashed off by the congenitally broke writer to earn a quick buck (actually, about £7,000 in today's money). Rose considers it legitimate, "within the line of direct descent of the text". That judgement alone will have many Joyceans spluttering into their Guinness in Irish bars across the globe this month.

Paring his fingernails in some writer's heaven with a close resemblance to Davy Byrne's bar, Joyce would enjoy the latest spat. Pedantry amused him, and he even slipped a puzzle with no solution into *Ulysses*. The mysterious "man in the brown macintosh", a "lanky-looking galoot", crops up 13 times. Speculations as to his identity have ranged from Death to the "lanky-looking" Joyce himself. Along with scraps over hyphens and apostrophes, they will no doubt continue among the faithful – and the obsessive – for the next 75 years. The rest of us can simply raise a glass of stout on Bloomsday and say *Sláinte* – with an accent, of course.

Monday is Bloomsday, the day on which 'Ulysses' was set. It's also the launch of a new edition that has sparked rows in academia

argues, *Ulysses* bequeathed its "superb stream-of-consciousness method" and its use of myth as "an underlying narrative structure for what seems like a rather shapeless slice of modern life". And, as Joyce himself lamented to Ezra Pound in the aftermath of the early critical furor, "If only someone would say the book was so damn funny." It is.

Lodge warns that "there will never be a Platonically perfect text of *Ulysses*, any more than there will be of Shakespeare". Danis Rose himself aims for a reader-friendly "people's *Ulysses*". He tries to free up the flow and pace of the text.

the text that Joyce was directly involved with, the one that he saw through the press" and counts as "a historical document in and of itself".

For critics such as Rainey, Rose navigates too much by his own cavalier idea of common sense. Rose admits that he would rather "maximise the pleasure of the reader" than pinpoint the elusive "final intention" of such a whimsical character as Joyce. Hence the charges of crowd-pleasing populism. Rose believes that book production is a kind of "social contract" with many participants, whose contributions matter almost as much as what

on the old Bodley Head text that (for example) owners of the Penguin *Ulysses* will know. Even the *New York Times* hailed this feat of German textual engineering. A case of *Vorsprung durch Technik*? Not quite. Over the next two years, under relentless fire from the American Joycean John Kidd, bits of Gabler's shiny new model fell apart.

For instance, the German's heavy-duty scholarship had changed the name of a Dublin cricketer called Captain Butler

Fly the flag? It is time to forget it



Trevor Phillips

The emergence of global brands with not just products but values is more important than the balance sheet

When it comes to funky New Labour values, we already have them etched on our hearts. We care about education, especially hi-tech, Internet-type education. We want the environment to flourish for our children. We love the idea of the world joining hands in a great multicultural hymn of solidarity. But when politicians start talking earnestly about such values it's hard to hear for the sound of roaring laughter – let's say it – lefty values most successfully? Some surprising champions of New Labour values are emerging, and strange bedfellows they make for former socialists.

In education and technology, it is not David Blunkett's words which convince us; it is those of Bill Gates of Microsoft, and Sir Iain Vallance of BT. No matter how many London Underground trains the spin doctors force poor John Prescott to take he'll never have the clout with the eco-consumer of Anita Roddick of The Body Shop. Robin Cook and Clare Short can chase the sun around the globe preaching interdependency and multiculturalism, but it's Benetton's ads and BA's new tailfins that are defining our new internationalism.

The BA corporate makeover is by no means unique. Almost all our multinationals have abandoned the "British" tag. Imperial Chemical Industries carries no baggage from the past in the global brand ICI. But many have gone further. Not only do they strive not to be seen as British, but increasingly they pose themselves as being above national boundaries and interests, ready to serve the consumer, whoever or wherever he or she is. BA's boss Bob Ayling rightly points out that a frosty, middle-class, white brand does not do BA much good. That's commercial sense, but the emergence of these global brands with not just products but values is more important

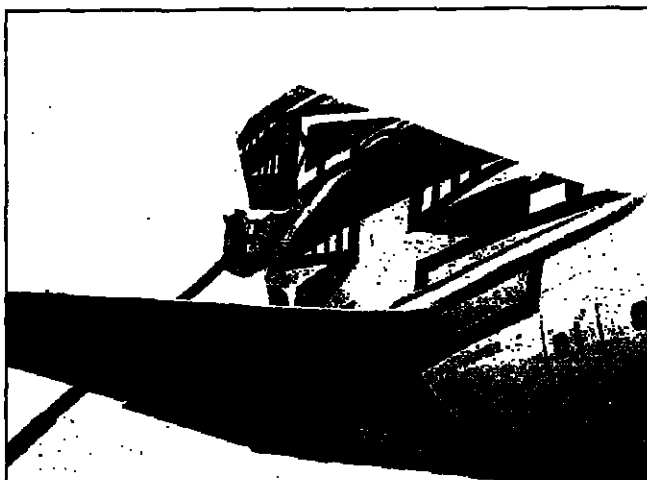
than just a balance sheet item. The power of the multinationals to market a way of life is not new. American companies have always done it. What is totally new is the way in which they are using it. As Villains go it used to be hard to beat a multinational corporation. As a student activist I was jet-propelled by outrage at the hard-faced bogymen who led mighty, rapacious outfits which bestrode the known world like modern day Caesars. They were great targets – selling unnecessary baby milk to poor Africans, reaping the harvest of death from tobacco plantations, holding democratically elected governments to ransom with threats to withdraw and take their lucrative taxes and goodwill (ie. bribes to corrupt officials) with them. And every now and again there would be a juicy link with the CIA. A committed lefty could get up in the morning with a song in his heart – probably *The Red Flag* – and know that there would be a windmill to tilt at come what may.

Virtue, on the other hand, could always be found at home in the beleaguered public utilities, often headed by talented working-class boys made good – Marsh at the railways, Ezra at coal, others so anonymous you'd never know their names until they retired – who toiled away at distributing social goods for little reward other than the thanks of a grateful nation and a seat in the House of Lords.

How things change. Today, the bosses of our great utility companies are about as popular in polite circles

as stinging nettles at a nudist camp. The "fat cats" are fair game for every passing demagogue, the object of scorn by stand-up comics and leader writers alike and the targets of rage by consumers.

The multinationals are another story. Today, they even call themselves something different – transnationals. The change is meant, I think, to suggest that instead of dominating nations, they connect them. We



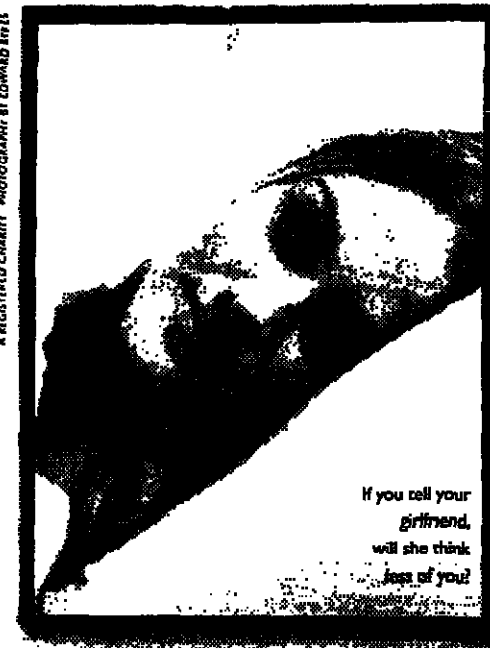
should not be starry-eyed about this; the idea of Ford, or Coca-Cola, or even BT merely being a gentle facilitator of good relations across the planet would take some swallowing. Worse still, nothing can excuse Shell's apparent neutrality in the face of state terror and summary executions in Ogoni in Nigeria. Ford's embarrassing record of insensitivity and its murky record of discrimination against its black workers is nothing to write home about. Yet increasingly it is these transnational corporations which are carrying the most progres-

sive values across the world. They do it for their own reasons. They believe that democracy creates stability – a prerequisite for successful business. They dislike war, because it sends share prices plummeting. They want more and more people to have the money to buy their goods; and their endless search for dominance fuels technological advance that provides new choices to humanity every day. Eventually, one hopes managements may be forced to realise that discrimination or turning a blind eye to evil in one country will lead to their being punished elsewhere in their empires. That too, may well lead the transnationals to exercise a more benign, civilising influence.

Even the banks are getting in on the act. The French farmers' bank, Cridit Agricole, anticipating the euro's arrival has now taken to giving account holders their balances in the currency, probably as a way of blunting the

French people's notorious dislike of their neighbours, especially the Germans. This is heady stuff. All capitalism is about self-interest; but that self-interest can be defined and satisfied in different ways. If the American style is capitalism without constraint, and the Australians bring us capitalism with *cojones*, we may be seeing a new European contribution to 21st century global economics: capitalism with a conscience. Is it now time, as Dr Strangelove might say, to stop worrying and learn to love the transnationals?

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obituaries / gazette

Michael Orrom

Michael Orrom belonged to that rare breed of practitioners, the documentary film director.

He became interested in film while at Cambridge, where he also met the young Mary Beales, a painter and sculptress of great talent, whom he later married. After graduating in physics in the middle of the Second World War, he spent the rest of the war years working on radar design at Hayes, Middlesex.

When he left, he got in touch with Paul Rotha, the pioneering British documentary maker, whom he had met while a student. Rotha gave him a job as production assistant. Orrom described it as "excellent training - you did a bit of editing, a bit of writing, a bit of cutting, in fact a bit of everything, from direction to sweeping the cutting-room floor." After two years he earned his first film credit, as associate director and editor of Rotha's film on world food problems, *The World is Rich* (1948). He also worked on *No Resting Place* (1950) and similar documentaries, before deciding to go freelance as a writer-director.

Along with projects for the Shell film unit, many of Orrom's early jobs were half-hour films for BBC television for which he wrote the script and collaborated on production. One of them, *The Waiting People* (1954), made in collaboration with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, about the thousands of refugees still housed in camps across Europe, had a striking result, as Orrom explained: "At that time the British government had not been contributing for a year or more for some reason, but within a week of the programme going out the contri-

butions were resumed and I was told that the film had provided the momentum for this."

Other early films were influential in drawing attention to social problems and people's response to them. *Cry For Love* focused on children abandoned by their parents, while *No Title to Life* was a dramatisation of what it was like to be illegitimate. He also scripted *The Innocent Killer*, a drama-documentary based on the true story of a rabid dog entering Britain, and *Test Pilot*, about Wing Commander Beumont, the test pilot of the *Lightning*, which won a Rome Festival Award in 1959.

Over the next few years his film work included *Seven Years in Tibet* - the story of Heinrich Harrer's escape into Tibet during the Second World War to become the confidante of the Dalai Lama, which he co-wrote and edited, and *Ring Around the Earth* (1964), made in the Pacific, for Cable and Wireless. In 1966 he formed an independent film-making company, Film Drama Limited. His first project, also for Cable and Wireless, was *Apollo in Ascension*, a 30-minute film about building a satellite station on Ascension Island and its role in the Apollo moon landing. It ran at Expo '67 in the British Pavilion and represented Britain at the fifth Scientific Film Festival in Belgrade in 1968.

Orrom went on to make four more films for Cable and Wireless, including *Arabia the Fortunate* (1974) with its ravishing visuals, which was shot in Bahrain, Qatar, Dubai and Oman. He specialised in making sponsored industrial/educational documentaries for companies and organisations like Tube Investments, the



Orrom filming for Cable and Wireless: the quiet, unflappable professional who got his way by example, not bullying

Schools Council and the British Productivity Council. Occasionally he ventured into the realms of fiction - for example, with his television fantasy *The Secret Pony* (1970), and also worked on a script of the Strindberg play *Lucky Peter*, which sadly never came to fruition.

He was a man of great good humour and humanity. This was invariably reflected in his films. In *Portrait of Queenie* (1965), a documentary about the gifted blues singer Queenie Watts, who ran a pub on the Isle of Dogs, he made a quite specific statement with the anti-

nuclear blues number "Didn't Want the Kissin' to Stop", accompanied by Stan Tracey; it was later issued on LP. He had been looking for a pianist to play for Queenie and discovered Tracey in Ronnie Scott's when Scott had the downstairs club in Gerrard Street. From this it can be seen that Orrom only used the best musicians on his music sessions.

Indeed he had an exceptionally good ear. The *Daily Mail* said he gave a new voice to documentary film music, and music always featured prominently in his films.

In fact the title number of one, *East West Island* (1966), is currently being used in the Radio 3 programme *Hong Kong - The Last Days*.

Michael Orrom was an immensely sociable man who was never happier than when giving a party at his rural retreat across the field from Chequers. Each year he and Mary would throw open the terrace gardens to an exhibition of her previous year's work. Although he was not a committed Christian his annual carol party was always a joyful occasion.

James Stevens

Only rarely, in a lifetime, one meets people like Michael Orrom: gentle, unaggressive, modest, committed as if by nature to the idea of a decent, democratic society, writes Richard Hoggart.

I knew him only from the early Seventies, during the last third of his life. But he let me see a draft autobiography of his early years. They were in some ways typical of many young intellectuals, especially in the latter half of the Thirties; in other ways they were out of the ordinary.

He went to Trinity College,

Cambridge to read Physics, but film - cinema - more and more preoccupied him. As did left-wing politics; he became part of a very gifted group which included, to mention only those who came immediately to mind, the Marxist critic Arnold Kettle and the biologist John Maynard Smith.

One of the happier achievements of his later years was the making of a film for Channel 4, *Fragments of Memory* (1984) on the genesis and achievements of that group. It contained much of his own early film and still photography, and caught above all the group's comradely cheerfulness.

Immediately after Cambridge, Orrom entered war service as a scientist. After that, by good luck and determination, he went to work with Paul Rotha. Those pages in particular from the story of his early years deserve publishing; they throw inner light on an aspect of the development of English cinema.

Those of us who were, from the late Forties, beginning to work in what are now known as Cultural Studies sought out Orrom and Raymond Williams' *Preface to Film* (1954). That must have been his and Williams's first book.

In the early Seventies, with the support of his friend Norman Swallow, he became involved in the making of social documentaries. We first met about that time. He was commissioned to make a film in the BBC Omnibus series. How we arrived at a subject I do not remember but one day we set off for Tunisia, to film a village wedding in the hinterland. Then back to Hunslet, my native district in Leeds, to record a wedding at the Woodhouse Hill

Working Men's Club. An original diptych, at least.

Throughout - and filming, especially on location, is usually fraught - he gave an example of the quiet, unflappable professional who gets his way by example not bullying. The Quiet Man, incidentally, disappeared when he got behind the wheel of a fast car. His inevitable conviction for doing a ton was reported with a mixture of embarrassment and near-glee.

After Tunisia we met regularly in the creative chaos of his Soho office above Ronnie Scott's. We were planning a BIG film chronicle, which was never finished. To assist conception, he always took from a crammed cupboard a Lyon's Grannies Cake, to which we were both partial.

A major moment in each of his later years was the large birthday party at the hillside house near Great Missenden. Mary his wife - whose sculptures dotted the steep garden - made huge bowls of cassoulet and the like; and Michael Orrom, in his element with old Cambridge friends, neighbours and many another, moved around, unobtrusively, refilling glasses. By then his hair had resolved itself into two white plumes, one on each side of his head, so that he looked rather like a very affectionate, amiable Professor Bognstam. That will be the last of many good memories, for most of his friends.

Michael David Orrom: documentary film scriptwriter, producer and director, born Wolverhampton 4 May 1918; married 1957 Mary Beales (three daughters, one stepdaughter); died Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire 6 June 1997.

Vittorio Mussolini

Vittorio Mussolini was the eldest son of the dictator Benito Mussolini. Of the four children of "Il Duce" to survive the war (another son, Bruno, died in a plane crash in 1941), it was Vittorio who took upon himself the task of acting as the "family memory", turning out revisionist books and articles and even showing selected visitors around the Mussolini family home, Villa Carpena, in Predappio.

As a child, Vittorio hardly ever saw his father; for all his insistence on family values, Benito Mussolini was largely absent from the home, and even dined in private on his rare visits to his wife Rachele. When he did see his children, Dennis Mack Smith tells us in his biography, *Mussolini* (1981), "he tended to address them as if they were a public meeting."

At the age of 20, soon after qualifying for his pilot's licence, Vittorio was made an air force lieutenant and sent off to bomb Adowa in the opening salvo of his father's invasion of Ethiopia. Vittorio's younger brother Bruno and his brother-in-law Galeazzo Ciano also piloted planes on the same mission. Though he was reputed to be the most artistic and intellectual of the five children, Vittorio was as well-versed in the callous choreography of violence as his father, as this passage from his memoirs, "Life with my Father", published in 1957, demonstrates. I still remember the effect produced on a small group of Gallic tribesmen massed around a man in black

clothes. I dropped an aerial torpedo right in the middle, and the group opened up like a rose. It was most entertaining.

Vittorio also flew planes as a volunteer for the Nationalists in Spain in 1936 and later, in the Second World War. In between missions he indulged his other passion: the cinema. He wrote the treatment for the most successful Italian film of the Thirties, *Luciano Serra, pilota* (1938), which, bizarrely, was co-scripted by Roberto Rossellini, later to found the neo-realist school with his seminal anti-Fascist film *Roma Città Aperta* (1945).

In later years, Vittorio made much of his contact and friendship with left-wing and Jewish directors, writers and film critics during the brief period in the late 1930s and early 1940s when he edited the journal *Cinema*. Openly left-of-centre critics such as Michelangelo Antonioni were published in the magazine, and Vittorio even found lodgings for the distinguished German Jewish critic Rudolf Arnheim in the Mussolini Roman residence, Villa Torlonia, with another Jewish friend, Orlando Piperno. Vittorio took part in the Mille Miglia car race, finishing tenth.

His opposition to the race laws promulgated by his father in 1938 appears to have been genuine, and was one of the aspects of the regime that later weighed most heavily on his conscience: he never tired of repeating that "my father died without knowing what was happening in Belsen or Auschwitz" - a desperate claim, as Benito Mussolini certainly did know, even though he preferred to avoid the issue.

It wasn't easy being the son of a Fascist dictator immediately after the war. Either you became a jazz pianist, like Benito Mussolini's youngest son Romano, or you left the country - which Vittorio did. He ended up in Argentina, where he opened a succession of Italian restaurants. He kept in touch with the family, though - especially with Romano, who was beginning his career on the Italian cabaret circuit - and also corresponded with Giorgio Almirante, the head of Italy's neo-Fascist party (the MSI) and with Almirante's protégé Gianfranco Fini, now the leader of the centre-right Alleanza Nazionale party.

In the mid-Sixties Vittorio returned to Italy, and spent the rest of his life presiding over the family home and mausoleum at Predappio, near Forlì. Here he published books with titles like *Mussolini - Thought and Action*, in handsomely bound limited editions, which sold well in neo-Fascist circles. But he refused to get directly involved in politics: his niece, Alessandra Mussolini - now an Alleanza Nazionale MP - recalls that he was "terrified" when she announced that she was going to stand for parliament.

Lee Marshall

Vittorio Mussolini: born 1916; married (four children); died Rome 12 June 1997.



Benito Mussolini flanked by his sons Vittorio (right) and Bruno, 1935

Photograph: Sport & General

George Chatham

The lessons which Dick Hobbs adduces from George Chatham's sordid career [10 June] include one about television and real crime: both the risks implicit in the former and the morality of packaging the latter as entertainment, writes Pieter van der Merwe.

In 1951, so the story at the National Maritime Museum goes, its then director appeared in an early BBC broadcast showing the famed *chelenk* awarded to Nelson by the Sultan of Turkey after the Battle of the Nile in 1798. This showy plume of Brazilian diamonds the admiral wore in his hat, where its more-than-oriental splendour added much to his reputation for ungentlemanly vanity: it was of course meant for a turban.

Shortly afterwards a lightweight army ladder appeared overnight against the wall of the then lightly armoured museum, a window was forced, an eight-foot sheet of case glass spectacularly smashed and the sparklers were gone. Thereafter bars and regular security upgrades became the order of the day.

Forty-three years later, in 1994, the BBC did a documentary series on the underworld showing how "crime really doesn't pay in the long term" - except of course for television producers who know its fascination and make it a regular stock in trade. In the course of this, and a related promotional article in the *Independent* magazine (12 February 1994), the museum learnt that Chatham was the man who claimed (dis)credit for the deed and got "a few thousand" for the diamonds before they were broken up. Then 81, he was still living at some public expense - not this time in jail but in sheltered council housing: in a civilised society "an old and highly respected brigand" (W.S. Gilbert's phrase) also had his rights.

The *chelenk* and Chatham now only exist in old photographs and legend. It is a small historical satisfaction to record their relationship: none to reflect how television may have provoked theft and can still benefit from it. Of course it all depends whether you believe him or not.

Norman Cleaveland, rugby player, died Santa Fe, New Mexico 8 June, aged 96. Member of the 1924 US Olympic rugby team that defeated the French 17-3 to win the gold medal, sparking off a riot. It was the last year rugby was played as an official Olympic sport.

Dennis James, television presenter, died Palm Springs, California 3 June, aged 79. Host of US shows such as *The Price is Right* (1972-79) and *Name That Tune* (1974-75). First-ever variety show host, and first on the spot live newsreel commentator.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at 25.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

TODAY: The Queen takes the salute at the Queen's Birthday Parade on Horse Guards, London SW1; and takes the salute at a fly past of Royal Air Force aircraft, from the balcony of Buckingham Palace. The Queen Mother and Prince Edward also attend. Princess Margaret, President, attends a Gala Dinner in aid of the Royal Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, at Drumlogie Golf Club, Leith, during the Drimlogie Golf Invitational. The Duke of Kent, Colonel, Scots Guards, lunches with officers attending the Queen's Birthday Parade, at Wellington Barracks, London SW1.

TOMORROW: The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron and Thelma Man, Lord's Taverners, attends a Patron's versus President's Charity Cricket Match at the Home Park Cricket Ground, preceded by lunch at St George's School, Windsor Castle. The Duchess of Gloucester, Vice Patron, The Queen's Club, presents the prizes at the Men's Singles Final at the Club, London W14. The Duchess of Kent, Patron, the Yorkshire County Cricket Club, attends the Surrey vs Yorkshire cricket match at the Oval, London SE11.

Changing of the Guard **TODAY:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am; 1st Battalion Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 1pm. **TOMORROW:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am; 1st Battalion Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am. Band provided by the Irish Guards.

Birthdays

TODAY: Sir James Black, pharmacologist, 73; Mr Paul Boateng MP, 46; Dame Florence Ceyford, former GLC councillor, 100; Professor Peter Fowler, archaeologist, 61; Miss Stuart Giff, tennis player, 28; Lady Healey, biographer, 79; Mr David LeRoy-Lewis, former chairman, Henry Ansbacher Holdings, 79; Miss Dorothy McGuire, actress, 78; Mrs Yvonne Moores, chief nursing officer, Department of Health, 56; Sir Gerald Peat, chartered accountant, 77; Mr Jonathan Raban, novelist and travel writer, 55; Miss Kathleen Raine, poet, 89; Dame Rosemary Rue, former president, BMA, 69; Mr Pierre Salinger, politician and journalist, 72; Mr Anthony Sher, actor and writer, 48; Mr Nigel Short, chess player, 32; Professor Sir Trevor Smith, Vice-Chancellor, Ulster University, 60; Mr James Wright, Vice-Chancellor, Newcastle-upon-Tyne University, 58; Mr Mike Yarwood, impressionist, 56.

TOMORROW: Sir David Allandale, chairman, Coats Viyella, 65; Mr Richard Baker, broadcaster, 72; Mr Simon Callow, actor, 48; Miss Mary Ellis, singer and actress, 100; Mr Ken Fletcher, tennis player, 57; Sir John Fretwell, former ambassador to France, 67; Air Chief Marshal Sir Joseph Gilbert, 66; The Most Rev Trevor Huddleston, human rights campaigner, 84; Mr John Humphries, former senior partner, Travers Smith Brühlwalte, 72; Admiral Sir Charles Madden, former Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, 91; Mr John Morrison, former president, Wolfson College, Cambridge, 84; Lord Murray QC, a former Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 75; Mr David Newsome, former Master of Wellington College, 68; Miss Nicola Pagett, actress, 52; Mr John Redwood MP, 46; Miss Margaret Rutland, Headmistress, Godolphin and Latimer School, 52; Mr

Sukhdev Sharma, chief executive, Commission for Racial Equality, 51; The Rev Martin Smyth MP, 66; Sir Ninian Stephen, former Governor-General of Australia, 74.

Anniversaries

TODAY: Births: Harriet Beecher Stowe, novelist, 1811; Burl Ives (Burl Ives Vanhook Ives), actor and singer, 1909; Sam Wassink (Samuel Wassink), actor, director and producer, 1919; Ernesto Guevara de la Serna (Che Guevara), revolutionary, 1928; Deaths: Orlando de Lassus, composer, 1594; Jerome Klapka Jerome, writer, 1927; Emmeline Pankhurst, suffragette, 1928; Gilbert Keith Chesterton, author, 1936; John Logie Baird, television pioneer, 1946; Jorge Luis Borges, writer, 1986; Henry (Enrico) Mancini, composer, 1994. On this day: King William III landed at Carrickfergus in Ireland, 1690; the Stars and Stripes flag was adopted by the Continental Congress in America, 1777; Henley Regatta was held for the first time, 1839; the German army entered and occupied Paris, 1940; the Vatican announced that the Index of Prohibited Books was abolished, 1966. Today is the Feast Day of St Dognmél, St Methodius the Confessor and Saints Valerius and Rufinus.

TOMORROW: Births: Edward, the Black Prince, 1330; Edward Grieg, composer, 1843; James Norval Harold Robertson-Justice, actor, 1905; Deaths: Wat Tyler, rebel, beheaded at Smithfield 1381; Wendell Meredith Stanley, biochemist, 1971; Ella Fitzgerald, singer, 1996. On this day: the Magna Carta was sealed by King John at Runnymede, near Windsor, 1215; Harrow School was founded, 1571; the Lake District was made into a National Park, 1951; Maj-Gen Jeremy Moore accepted the surrender of all Argentine forces on East West Falkland, 1982. Today

is the Feast Day of St Adelaide or Aloysius, St Dulcis, St Edburga of Winchester, St Germana Cousin, St Hesyphus of Durestorum, St Lunsdelmus, St Orestis and St Vitus. Today is the Official Birthday of the Queen.

Lectures

TODAY: Victoria and Albert Museum: Amy de la Haye, "The Curating Edge: 50 years of British fashion", 2.30pm. Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "The Theory of Artistic Compulsion", 1pm. British Museum: Rowena Loverance, "Roman Mosaics of Syria", 1.15pm. National Portrait Gallery: Phyllis Gorlick-King, "Folkies Topolski and His Portraits", 3pm.

TOMORROW: Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Plain Air Painting", 2.30pm. National Portrait Gallery: Mary Connolly, "Elizabeth I's Progress", 3pm.

Dinners

Royal Naval College, Greenwich
Lord Bingham of Cornhill was the guest of honour at the Annual Dinner of the Royal Navy Barristers held yesterday evening in the Painted Hall at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich. Captain D.R. Humphreys RN, Chief Naval Judge Advocate, presided.

King's African Rifles and East African Forces Dinner Club
Brigadier M.W. Biggs, retiring President, King's African Rifles and East African Forces Dinner Club, presided at the club's 50th Anniversary Dinner held yesterday evening at the Royal Over-Seas League, St James's, London SW1. Maj-Gen R.S.N. Mans, Incoming President, was the principal guest.

Time to rescue Iona from the weirdies

faith & reason

There is a crucial difference between Celtic spirituality and Celtic Christianity, argues Paul Vallely, who wants to bring St Columba back from the Hebridean fringe.

It has been a good week for what John Bell calls the weirdies and beardies. Of John Bell, more later. "Celtic spirituality" is the pursuit of these peculiar and hirsute individuals. Monday marked the 1400th anniversary of the death of St Columba, an important evangelist for the distinctive style of Christianity which had established a foothold on these isles centuries before the arrival from Rome of Augustine of Canterbury. We have therefore been besieged in the religious media by images and sounds of wild waves crashing on misty shores; skies of lowering turmoil have accompanied prayers about running waves and shining stars.

There is a touch of "Hullo Clouds, Hullo Sky" about all this. Andrew Brown pointed out in this column last week the dangers of such harking after a golden age. You can see what he means: life in the sixth century must have been bleak, cold and windswept and the diet of kelp and oar-cakes fairly dreary. It is not hard to see why the Presbyterian consciousness objected to the pagan overtones of the prayers and invocations which those early Celts developed to get them through the daily grind - blessings on quotidian activities like rising and making the bed, fetching water from the spring, rekindling the fire, milking the cow, churning the butter, and so on. But it is easy to miss the point, so accustomed have we become to the thinking of Augustine which has supplanted that of his Celtic predecessor.

The first Archbishop of Canterbury brought with him the thinking of his namesake from Hippo, steeped in a division of body and spirit which eventually led religion to Luther's "two kingdoms" and secular thinking to the dualism of Descartes.

Its profound effect on European thinking is evident still in the present pope's polarisation of our world into the "culture of life" and the "culture of death".

Columba's reading of Christianity was different. His emphasis was on the integration of body and soul, sacred and secular, worship and work, prayer and politics (it is significant that his successors in the abbey of Iona were Benedictines with their ethos that work is prayer, and prayer is work). His vision was one which enfolded humanity in creation; the search for places where the veil between heaven and earth is particularly thin is what touches a chord here for today's environmentalists.

His stress upon hospitality opened up that area where peace requires more than justice; the opposite of war is hospitality, it has been said, because by it we create space for another person, acknowledging their humanity and their needs, which is what conflict most acutely denies. His sense of the balance between the needs of the community and the individual - encouraging both personal eremitism and pil-

grimage and yet communities which elected their leaders - chimes well with the modern sense of the Church as the people of God on a pilgrimage through life.

All of this perished in face of a Christianity which - having inherited the mind-set and governance of imperial Rome - was organised, bureaucratic, hierarchical and ruthlessly single-minded. When unity was proclaimed a priority, leaders like Hilda, the Celtic Abbess of Whitby, and the Scots Queen Margaret, acquiesced. The very hospitality of the Celtic monks and priests ensured that they complied with the practices of the insistent newcomers from Rome.

Today we see an attempt to regain what was lost. But the mistake is to seek for it among the stones and shores, symbols and poetry, of the 6th-century Dalriada. For their daily grind is not ours. If God is to be found "in the every day" then we must look elsewhere, for how could our routine industrial post-modernist reality have much in common with that of insular medieval subsistence farmers?

Which is why the present day Iona Community - of which the aforementioned John Bell is one of the more prominent members - is a body of committed religious folk who reside not on the Hebridean fringes but in the nation's inner cities. There is a dispersed community which returns to the island only once a year on retreat; instead they live among the unemployed, the sick, the addicted and the marginalised - this is Celtic Christianity not Celtic spirituality, they insist. Living physically apart but united by purpose and prayer, they reflect the fractured nature of our modern world. And that is a far cry from mere romanticism.

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Data Bank	
FTSE 100	4783.1 +25.7
FTSE 250	4586.1 +40.9
FTSE 350	2812.5 +14.1
SEAO VOLUME	457.4m shares
53.077 bargains	
Gilt Index	174
Share spotlight	
share price, pence	
220	
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Shell flares as Footsie climbs to another new peak

Taking Stock

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year



Shell flared 25.5p to a 1,259p closing peak as institutional investors warmed to the Anglo-Dutch oil giant.

At one time the shares were 32p higher with US investors piling in following a New York presentation. Then stockbroker Credit Suisse First Boston injected a little caution into the proceedings, switching its recommendation from buy to hold.

The oil giant also benefited from continuing rumours of a big strike in Nigeria. With many London analysts positive on the sector, Shell has gushed 59p since Monday.

CSFB suggested a switch out of Shell into British Petroleum, up 12.5p to 757.5p. It suggested the impact of any overhang following the Kuwait Investment Office sale had been overplayed.

The rest of the stock market was again in rampant form with Footsie climbing to another

peak and for the second day running second-liners in a remarkably ebullient mood.

NatWest Securities, however, does not believe the time is ripe to switch from Footsie into smaller and mid-cap shares despite their "horrendous" under-performance.

The FTSE 250 index scored its best gain for more than a year. It rose 40.9 points to 4,586.1 with some observers wondering whether the long under-performance of non-Footsie shares was at last coming to an end.

There was almost certainly an element of bottom fishing among the 250 shares but they could nevertheless be on a roll. The supporting index has moved ahead for the past six days, gaining more than 120.

Results this week from FKI, Johnson Matthey, and Scapa have attracted attention. Stockbroker Panmure Gordon says: "The most encour-

aging aspect of FKI's and Johnson Matthey's figures was the demonstration the leading mid-cap engineers can deliver and/or beat existing forecasts." The broker believes Johnson, up 24.5p to 547.5p, and FKI, 13p higher at 193p, are buys.

NatWest is less enthusiastic - at least about FKI. It expects growth to slow and regards the shares as a sell.

Footsie ended 25.7 points higher at 4,783.1; at one time it was just a few points from 4,800.

Energy shaded to 646p as PacificCorp, the US giant, produced its 690p a share offer.

But worries that the proposed deal could be sent to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission curbed enthusiasm. The possible takeover for food group Albert Fisher provided a 12.25p boost to 46.5p. The shares have been weak in the past two months with the fall accelerating this week, leading to Fisher's removal from the FTSE 250 index.

Logica shareholders had reason to rue Friday the 13th. The shares crashed 95.5p to 755p following a profit warning. It was a grim development for other high flying computer shares with the likes of Sema, off 84p at 1,173.5p.

Rank, the leisure group, added to the trading gloom with a cautious statement which knocked the shares 40.5p to 385p. Hanover International, the hotel group, fell 3.5p to 121.5p after warning that delays to extensions at one of its hotels would pull profits below market expectations.

Stockbroker Greig Middleton reduced its estimate from £2.7m to £2m. The verge of rapid growth and any bidder could judge the time is ripe to strike.

Builder Tilbury Douglas improved 27.5p to 670p as German group Philip Holzmann sold its 9.9 million shareholding through Cazenove and UBS. The shares went to institutions at 575p. Holzmann said last week it intended to sell its 29.4 per cent stake.

Rolls-Royce climbed 9.5p to 268.5p; it is part of a consortium which has won a British Midland contract and enjoyed SBC Warburg support. British Steel gained 7.25p to 163.25p ahead of Monday's results.

Inspirations, where a bidder lurks, fell 12p to 68.5p, and computer group Azlan lost 30p to 555p before trading was halted because of "unresolved accounting issues".

Cartland Whalley & Barker, the venture capital group which produced outstanding figures on Thursday, jumped 16.5p to 115p as director Tony Gardiner increased his stake by 1.1 million shares at 90p.

What on earth is going on at Rage Software, the once high flying computer games group? The shares, 25p 18 months ago, have been in steady decline with the fall accelerating in the past few weeks. There was heavy trading yesterday with, it was said, a Monaco-based investor, unloading. Turnover nudged 19 million shares with one trade, for 6.8 million, going through at 2.25p. The price closed at 3.25p.

British Vita, the chemical group, was firm at 210p. It is seeking overseas growth and Bill Lucas has become global development executive to pursue acquisitions and partnerships.

Simon Engineering rose 2.5p to 49p on continuing hopes that Rutland Trust will mount a takeover bid.

Share Price Data									
Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.									
Other details: Ex rights: Ex-dividend: Ex-all Unlisted Securities Market: Suspended: Partly Paid: All Paid Shares: 1 All Stock									
Source: FT Information									
The Independent Index									
The Index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0800 123 333, and when prompted to do so, enter the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0800 1233 followed by the code of the share.									
FTSE 100 - Real-time	00	Saving Rates	04	Prudential Issues	36				
UK Stock Market Report	01	Bullion Report	05	Water Shares	39				
UK Company News	02	Wall St Report	20	Electronics Shares	40				
Foreign Exchange	03	Tokyo Market	21	High Street Banks	41				
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Alcoholic Beverages									
Adnams	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Beck's	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Carlsberg	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Guinness	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Heineken	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Johnnie Walker	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Miller	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Stout	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
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Bank of London	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Bank of Montreal	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Bank of New York	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Bank of Paris	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Bank of Spain	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Bank of Sweden	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
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business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Biggest union wants no part in TUC energy venture

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

Unprecedented plans by union leaders to establish a profit-making business to supply cheap energy to 7 million trade unionists were undermined yesterday when the biggest TUC affiliate refused to take part.

The 1.3 million-strong public service union Unison, which has 15,000 members in the electricity and gas supply industry, said the proposal was at best

misplaced and at worst a "cynical attempt by the TUC to secure benefits for some union members while gambling with others' jobs".

A strongly worded emergency motion passed at the union's annual conference in Brighton yesterday called for a campaign against Union Energy, which intends to buy supplies from producers and sell them on to union members.

Unison yesterday decided that it would refuse to make the names and addresses of its

members available to the company, whose acting chief executive is Peter Ibbotson, a former director at J Sainsbury. Potentially the company is the biggest bulk purchasing group to become involved in energy purchase for households.

A spokeswoman for the TUC said the venture, which is seeking investors from the private sector, enjoyed widespread support and she had little doubt the project would go ahead.

The row will almost certainly surface at the TUC Congress

in September where it will be portrayed as a struggle between old and new unionism, old and new Labour.

Yesterday's Unison motion argued that the TUC had failed to recognise the "realities" faced by Union members. Under deregulation employees faced an uncertain future with pressures on wages and conditions of employment, it said.

Companies would try to reduce costs to compete for customers and increase dividends to shareholders. Union Energy's

insistence on low prices could put Unison members out of work.

The resolution by the Unison conference refers to a TUC announcement which says that households subscribing to Union Energy would only need to be visited by one meter reader.

"Conference notes that the TUC has yet to develop an arbitration system to decide which meter reader will lose their job," the motion comments.

Mike Jeram, head of energy at Unison, said that only about 6 per cent of any customer's bill was made up of supply costs. The vast majority of costs were incurred in distribution, transmission and generation. "If they really are concerned about reducing prices, the TUC should be arguing for greater competition among generators and tighter regulation in distribution and transmission—although we are not saying they should."

It is intended that a quarter

of the shares in the new company will be owned by the TUC and the rest by private investors, probably City institutions.

Profits received by the TUC would be used to promote energy conservation measures, according to Mike Jones, head of finance and administration at the TUC and acting chairman of the company.

He said that the venture would be performing "exceedingly well" if it had signed up 400,000 households in three

years' time. In the longer term there could be many more, he said.

Mr Jones said the profits would be used to subsidise the installation of energy conservation measures in subscribers' homes.

Other money could be used to set up a hardship fund for trade unionists. Unison's decision to disassociate itself from the venture was regrettable, and he called for talks in an attempt to address the union's concerns.

Energy Group falls to £3.7bn US bid

Michael Harrison

Eastern Electricity yesterday became the eighth regional power supplier to fall under American control after its parent company, Energy Group, succumbed to a £3.7bn bid from the US utility PacificCorp.

The takeover will create a combined power giant with debts of nearly \$16bn (£9.8bn) financed partly through junk bonds.

Although PacificCorp is planning a series of asset sales which combined with cash in Energy Group's balance sheet will reduce indebtedness to \$12bn, the business will still have a conventional gearing of about 300 per cent.

The bid, values Energy Group at 695.5p a share compared with the 525p they were floated at when the business was demerged from Hanson in February. The shares lost 2p to close at 646p—50p below PacificCorp's offer price—on worries that the bid could be blocked for political reasons.

Apart from Eastern, which is also Britain's fourth biggest electricity generator with 10 per cent of the market, Energy Group owns Peabody, the largest coal producer in the US.

Derek Bonham, executive chairman, will make £632,000

Power giant in the making

	PacificCorp	Energy Group	Combined
Total assets	\$14.6bn	\$10.6bn	\$25.2bn
Sales	\$4.3bn	\$7.2bn	\$11.5bn
Employees	12,305	14,117	26,422
Customers (approx)	1.9m	3.1m	5.0m
Generation capacity	10,320MW	6,718MW	17,038MW
Coal production	23m tonnes	163m tonnes	186m tonnes

out of the 90,870 Energy shares he owns but none of the directors are expected to make big gains out of the long-term incentive schemes operated by the company.

Mr Bonham and John Devaney, chief executive of Eastern, said the Energy Board had been unanimous in recommending the bid to shareholders even though it had snuffed out the company's independence after only four months. Both have been asked to join the board of PacificCorp, which is based in Portland, Oregon on the US West Coast.

Mr Devaney also said he saw

no case for regulatory or political intervention since the bid did not raise any competition issues and seven other takeovers of regional electricity companies by US utilities had already been waved through.

The bid, which involves PacificCorp paying £3.7bn in cash for Energy and taking on £1.3bn of net debt will be funded with the aid of a £4bn facility underwritten by Goldman Sachs, Citibank and JP Morgan.

PacificCorp has \$6bn of debt on its own balance sheet, and will take on a further \$9.8bn through the acquisition. Of the

total financing required, \$1.5bn is in the form of senior notes with a double B credit rating otherwise known as junk bonds. PacificCorp's chief financial officer, Richard O'Brien, stressed yesterday that the debt would be held by the US parent company and not loaded into Energy Group adding that it would attract strong credit ratings because of the group's cash generating ability.

The company plans to reduce its debt by selling off its telecoms business, Pacific Telecom, for \$1.5bn and further asset sales of financial services businesses and an independent power company.

Mr O'Brien said that PacificCorp had no plans to sell any of Energy Group's assets in the UK nor was there any threat to the 14,000 employees of Energy Group.

The combination of the two businesses will create a grouping with total assets of \$25bn, sales of \$11.5bn and 26,000 employees. But there is virtually no overlap other than in coal because PacificCorp has no UK presence. Its main business is supplying 1.4 million domestic electricity customers in seven western states including California, Oregon and Washington.



Transatlantic alliance: Derek Bonham, chairman of Energy Group (right), with Richard O'Brien, finance director of PacificCorp

Albert Fisher talks to potential bidder

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Albert Fisher, the produce and seafood company, said yesterday that it had received an approach which might lead to an offer for the group. Though some analysts believe the approach could be a break-up bid from a financial buyer others say the bidder was a food group from outside the UK, possibly from the United States.

Among potential food buyers analysts were tipping were Dole, an American group which is one of the largest exporters of bananas into the European Union.

Albert Fisher shares soared 37 per cent to 46.5p on the announcement, valuing the company at £337m. City analysts said the bid was well-timed as the shares have fallen close to their five-year low recently.

The company, chaired by Stephen Walls, has long been tipped as a recovery prospect as it seeks to move away from commodity produce markets to more added-value products. But the shares have had a dreadful run as its food operations have continually been hit by weather-related problems. Its latest set of results were damaged by freezing weather which affected its cabbages harvest.

Unigate, Geest and Ahold, the Dutch supermarket group are not thought to be interested though early speculation mentioned all three.

If Albert Fisher does fall victim to a takeover it would mean a third bumper pay-off in seven years for Mr Walls. He received a rumoured £1m in 1990 following the takeover of Plessey, the telecommunications group, following its merger with GEC.

Two years later he was paid £800,000 in compensation from Arjo Wiggins Appleton, the paper group, following a disagreement over strategy. Mr Walls is on a two-year contract. "It's not a question of his past performance. We are fulsome in our praise for John, but the board have looked into what we need for the future. John has done 13 years with the CEBG and it's time for a change with new blood from outside the electricity sector."

A takeover would mean a brief tenure as chief executive for Neil England who only joined the company in November.

France causes further turmoil

Magnus Grimond

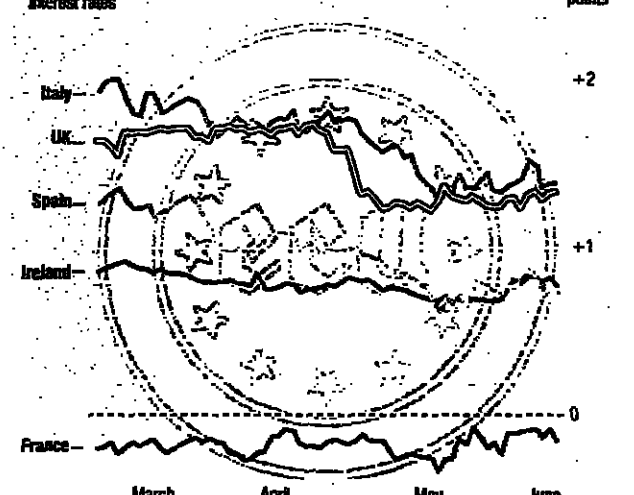
France threw another spanner into the great monetary union debate last week, after the insistence of the new government led by Lionel Jospin that the participants make a commitment to employment. The apparent failure of yesterday's three-way meeting between Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany, Mr Jospin and Jacques Chirac, the French President, to reach agreement on the issue helped send the pound to its highest level for nearly five years, at DM2.84, as dealers saw the currency as a safe haven from EMU turmoil.

Even so, early alarmists fears that the return of the socialists could prove fatal to the project are receding. Many expect this weekend's meeting of European finance ministers to hammer out a suitable compromise with the French. Success would then allow the principles of the stability pact regulating the operation of economic and monetary union to be agreed on at next week's Amsterdam summit.

These hopes mean our panel of EMU-watchers are now growing marginally more optimistic that the project will start on time in 1999, reversing some of the slide in confidence of the

Who will be in EMU? The financial markets' view

The closer other countries get to the black dotted line, the more likely they are to join EMU. Percentage points



TOWARDS EMU: If the line moves towards the German base line it means investors no longer require such a high premium for holding that country's bonds compared to Germany ones. Investors, however, are confident the currency won't devalue against the Mark. In other words, they think that country will be locked into a single currency with Germany in ten years' time.

AWAY FROM EMU: However, if they think the country won't be in EMU, that it will have higher inflation, and that there is a risk of a future devaluation against the Mark, then they will demand an extra premium for holding that country's bonds, so the line will move away from the base

When will EMU start? The City Analysts' View.

The independent analyst from: Niklar Europe, Paine Webber, ABN Amro, JP Morgan, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Salomon Brothers, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, James Capel, 1995

What probability they placed on EMU starting on time	65%	(58% last week)
Probability EMU starts on time	31%	(38% last week)
Probability EMU is delayed	31%	(38% last week)
Probability EMU never happens	6%	(6% last week)

previous fortnight. Graham Bishop of Salomon Brothers said: "After the nervousness, all the signs are that the stability pact will drop into place."

The political will is there, he said, and French concerns are likely to be met by a separate

statement from the heads of state reinforcing the European Union's role in tackling unemployment. Alex Gervard of Union Bank of Switzerland also points to this as a possible way to deal with the French.

Grid finance director removed

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

National Grid, the privatised electricity transmission business, yesterday unexpectedly parted company with its finance director, John Uttley, the man who gave some of its flotation windfall to charity after the group's controversial share debut.

In a statement the Grid said the move, with immediate effect, was by mutual agreement, though it emerged later that the board had met with Mr Uttley on Monday to ask him to leave the company to make way for "new blood".

He had been the Grid's finance director since the privatisation of the power industry in 1990 and had held the same post with the former Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) since 1984.

A Grid spokesman explained: "It's fair to say John wouldn't

have chosen this time to go. John would have wished to stay on a bit longer. It was a board decision raised with John on Monday. He has not decided what to do yet and hasn't got any other job to go to at this stage."



Rift: John Uttley gave some flotation gains to charity

Mr Uttley, 51, was thought to have provoked a boardroom rift 18 months ago when he asked the company to say publicly that he was giving about £50,000 to charity, following paper windfalls worth some £1.5m made by directors in the flotation.

The former industry minister, Tim Eggar, had asked Grid executives to give some of their gains to charity, but three other directors including David Jeffries, chairman, declined to reveal their decisions.

Mr Uttley, who was not at work yesterday and could not be contacted, is now likely to receive a pay-off of £230,000. Like other Grid executives Mr Uttley moved from a two-year to a one-year rolling contract last November. He also owns shares worth more than £340,000 at yesterday's closing price, but had options yielding paper profits worth a further £627,716.

His replacement is Stephen Box, a corporate finance partner with Coopers & Lybrand, the Grid's auditors. Mr Box, 46, advised the group during electricity privatisation in 1990 and the Grid's flotation during 1995. However he cannot take over the role until 4 August and David Jones, the Grid's chief executive, will take on the extra responsibilities until then. Mr Box will receive basic pay of £180,000, slightly higher than Mr Uttley's, and other short and long-term bonuses.

The Grid yesterday denied the change was a reflection on Mr Uttley's record. "It's not a question of his past performance. We are fulsome in our praise for John, but the board have looked into what we need for the future. John has done 13 years with the CEBG and it's time for a change with new blood from outside the electricity sector."

Gamble on rival YTTV offer

Institutional investors in Yorkshire-Tyne Tees Television believe that the £11.75 a share offer planned by Granada is too low, and are set to gamble that a rival bidder will enter the fray by increasing their share holdings, writes Cathy Newman.

One large institutional shareholder, which declined to be named, has told Granada and YTTV that the intended bid price failed to take into account

considerations such as a likely reduction to Yorkshire's licence fee. "If Granada attempts to get this company on the cheap, someone could see an opportunity. In our view, a fair price would be appreciably in excess of the £11.75 a share agreed," the shareholder said, and hinted that it was prepared to buy more YTTV stock in the market.

While there have been rumours that rival TV operators

such as United News & Media, which has a 13 per cent stake in YTTV, are considering a bid, there was speculation that overseas companies may strike. Mercury Asset Management, a large shareholder in YTTV, is understood to be disappointed by Granada's price. Other big shareholders include Schroder Asset Management, Barclays Global Investors, LGT Investors, Royal Sun Alliance and Fidelity.

Burton denies chief is to leave

Nigel Cope

Burton Group, the Debenhams and Dorothy Perkins retailer, yesterday dismissed City speculation that John Hoerner, chief executive, was to step down as "completely unfounded".

Rumours swept the stock market late on Thursday that Mr Hoerner might make way for Stuart Rose, the chief executive of the Burton Menswear, Dorothy Perkins and Evans subsidiaries.

"There's no truth in it. Absolutely none at all," he said. He also said there were no plans for a management reshuffle at a lower level, or that the company was set to issue a trading statement. "We will put out a statement in the middle of July as usual," he said.

Burton shares rose 4p to 128.5p on the statement. They had fallen slightly the day before in heavy late trading.

A decision by Mr Hoerner to stand aside would have surprised the stock market as he has been credited with the revival in the company's fortunes.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE CHANCERY DIVISION COMPANIES COURT No. 002673 of 1997

IN THE MATTER OF HAMPTONS ESTATES LIMITED AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition was on 29th May 1997 presented to her Majesty's High Court of Justice for the confirmation of a reduction of the capital of the above-named Company from £7,885,100 to £2,667,885.

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Companies Court Registrar at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2A 3LL on Wednesday the 25th day of June 1997.

Any creditor or shareholder of the said Company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for the confirmation of the said reduction of capital should appear at the time of hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose.

A copy of the said Petition will be furnished to any such person requiring the same by the undersigned Solicitors on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

DATED this 12th day of June 1997
Travers Smith Brathwaite
10 Snow Hill
London
EC1A 3AL
TEL: 0171 348 9133
FAX: 0171 326 3728
DX: 79 London
REF: TR1

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low
FTSE 100	4757.40	+32.60	+0.7	4757.40	4056.60
FTSE 250	4545.20	+38.30	+0.8	4729.40	4482.00
FTSE 350	2298.70	+16.40	+0.7	2298.70	2017.90
FTSE SmallCap	2283.74	+2.64	+0.1	2374.20	2178.29
FTSE All-Share	2252.99	+15.14	+0.7	2252.99	1989.78
New York	7659.06	+83.23	+1.1	7675.83	5032.94
Tokyo	20564.46	+274.53	+1.4	20611.58	17303.85
Hong Kong	13924.34	-497.18	-3.4	14990.90	12055.17
Frankfurt	3707.99	+30.56	+0.8	3707.99	2848.77

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling			UK medium gilt		
Index	1 Month	3 Month	Index	1 Month	3 Month
UK	6.47	7.06	UK	6.47	7.06
US	5.50	6.06	US	5.50	6.06
Japan	0.47	0.72	Japan	0.47	0.72
Germany	2.97	3.25	Germany	2.97	3.25

CURRENCIES					
£/\$			£/DM		
Index	Yesterday	Change	Index	Yesterday	Change
\$ (London)	1.6344	-0.27c	£ (London)	0.6118	+0.10
\$ (NY)	1.6345	+0.35c	£ (NY)	0.6118	-0.13
DM (London)	2.6184	+1.13p	DM (London)	1.7240	+0.99p
¥ (London)	186.275	+13.98p	¥ (London)	113.940	+12.58p
₹ (London)	98.6	+0.3	₹ (London)	102.4	+0.3

OTHER INDICATORS					
Oil Brent \$			RPI		
Index	Yesterday	Change	Index	Yesterday	Change
Oil Brent \$	17.55	-0.18	RPI	156.9	+0.38p
Gold \$	342.55	-1.50	Base Rates	109.7	+2.6p
Gold £	209.52	-0.64	Base Rates	107.0	+2.5p

هذا من الأصل



JEREMY WARNER

"Funds are set up for the benefit of the employee, and to the extent that the employer also benefits from them, it is by providing the employee with that perk. For every employer who thinks he is contributing too much, there is an employee and a pensioner who think benefits are too low"

Note to employers: leave off our pension windfall

It is just me, or am I right in suspecting that the purpose of a growing number of High Court judgments these days is to set an example rather than decide on the merits of the case? By establishing a point of principle, the judge gets himself into the legal text books and becomes a part of case law. So presumably that is what Mr Justice Robert Walker was trying to do with his judgment this week in favour of the National Grid and National Power, overturning a previous ruling by the Pensions Ombudsman, Sir Julian Farrand.

Sir Julian said earlier this year that the National Grid had misused more than £43m of the accumulated surplus in its pension scheme. Across the privatised electricity industry as a whole, more than £1bn of pension surplus has been realised in this way, so this was an important test case.

The point of principle Mr Justice Walker wants to establish is that final salary, occupational pension schemes are a jolly good thing, that companies should be allowed to use surpluses for their own purposes, and that they might stop supporting these schemes if they are prevented from doing so. It is a matter of real concern, he said, that when a company's right to realise the surplus is challenged the outcome "often seems to depend on subtle and complex arguments about the meaning of scheme documents". This he eloquently compares to arguing about how many angels can stand on the point of a needle.

So, having in 46 pages of written judgment rehearsed the various arguments about angels and needles, he comes round in the final two sentences to the real meat of the decision. "Any general exclusion of employers from surplus would tend to make employers very reluctant to contribute to their pension schemes more than the bare minimum that they could get away with. That would be unfortunate, and it would be even more unfortunate if employers were driven to abandon final salary, balance of cost schemes and were instead to turn to money purchase schemes which may in the long term prove less advantageous to the beneficiaries".

All good, down to earth, common sense, you might think. But actually he is wrong about this.

There is no evidence that being barred from sharing in the surplus affects either the level of contributions that companies are prepared to make to occupational pension schemes or their willingness to persist with them. In many schemes, such action is specifically excluded, and while some executives might feel unhappy about that, it hasn't driven them down the money purchase route.

Companies that persist with final salary schemes or set up new ones (yes, there are a few) do so not on the basis that there may be a windfall in it, but because they think it an important way of securing a committed and loyal workforce. Moreover, it is actually quite common for final salary schemes to

contain specific clauses requiring that the funds be used for the benefit of members.

In some cases these clauses are cast iron and unassailable, even by the cleverest corporate lawyers. In others, such as the electricity industry, they are more ambiguous, giving the corporate raiders their chance. But in all cases their purpose is the same - the protection is there not so much for the employee as the taxpayer. It would be all too easy for companies to use their pension schemes as a way of avoiding tax if they could at will pay into the scheme out of tax free income only to take it out as an untaxed surplus.

What about the argument that since companies are generally required to pick up the tab for a deficit, they should also be allowed to realise the surplus? Well actually this one doesn't work either. In nearly all cases where a scheme falls into deficit these days the company involved is insolvent and therefore incapable of providing the extra funding. Where schemes have more generally fallen into deficit as a result of a stock market crash, the position usually corrects itself over time without the need for enhanced employer contributions. By the same token, it might prove dangerous to realise an apparent surplus that could prove illusory in the event of a prolonged bear market.

It is apparent that the point of principle involved here is not nearly as clear cut as Mr Justice Walker might think. There is at the same time another point of principle that he's

ignored altogether. Pension funds are set up for the benefit of the employee, and to the extent that the employer also benefits from them, it is in the incentive provided by this extra form of remuneration. Personally I regard the employers' contribution to my pension arrangements as part of my salary and would feel pretty angry, I think justifiably, if the employer tried to take it back at a later stage. In any case, there are always two ways of looking at these things. For every employer who thinks he is contributing too much, there is an employee and a pensioner who think that benefits are too low.

Moving from the general to the particular, there has been some pretty shabby behaviour in this case. National Power's raid on the surplus was bulldozed through at a meeting of trustees on the casting vote of the finance director. The demands of member representatives that the issue should first be tested in the courts and a more equitable way of splitting the surplus be found were ignored. This does not strike me as much like abstract argument over how many angels can stand on the point of a needle. This was not a good judgment and it should certainly go to the Court of Appeal.

The Lord Mayor's Mansion House dinner this week was the scene for one of the cleverest pieces of public speaking I've witnessed in a long time. Everyone knows that Eddie George, Gov-

ernor of the Bank of England, is vehemently opposed to the Government's plans for a super-SIB, encompassing the Bank's supervisory functions. The question was whether he was actually going to say it publicly, right there in front of Gordon Brown, the TV cameras, and the City's great and good. Like a cat, he played with his audience. More and more daring he became in his criticism of the proposals.

The lounge suited Treasury contingent began to fiddle nervously with their mobile phones. Alistair Darling, chief secretary to the Treasury, jerked his head forward in dismayed anticipation and for one glorious moment we all thought, this is it, Eddie's going for the redundancy cheque. Then withdrawal. "In the final analysis", Mr George said, "it is not the regulatory structure that determines the outcome, but the way in which regulation is actually managed within that structure". Relief all round.

Meanwhile there was much nuttiness in the gents about all those lounge suits. "Bloody rude, if you ask me", was the general view among the black ties. A swift glance round the hall revealed the lounge suit brigade to be confined almost exclusively to ministers and Treasury officials. But hold on a mo. Who's that in the colourful tie and grey suit? Surely not Alistair Darling, director general of the Takeover Panel? Perhaps he's looking for a permanent job in regulation.

IT shares slump after warning by Logica

Sameera Ahmad

Shares across the premium-rated information technology sector slumped yesterday after Logica warned that difficulty in recruiting computer specialists, plus the strong pound, would mean profits a "little below market expectations".

Logica shares, which had soared 70 per cent over the last year to a recent £11 high, plunged 95.5p to 755p. Among other IT stocks, Sema fell 92p to 1166p, CMG lost 37.5p to 1225.5p, Mays dropped 32.5p to 1385p and Parity slipped 6.5p to 547.5p.

Martin Read, Logica's chairman, said the group had been a "bit behind" in recruiting computer specialists in the UK. "It is not as easy to get staff as it was. Some of our personnel people misjudged the difficulty. We have this wonderful order book, we're just not turning it into revenue."

Mr Read said that reinforced recruitment efforts had improved headcount growth. He said the strength of the pound had severely affected its European business, around a quarter of the total. "This year we have been making a particularly big push into Continental Europe. Strategically that has been exactly right."

However, he said the share price fall was overdue. House broker Hoare Govett trimmed 5 per cent off its full-year profit forecast to £23m.

Richard Holway, author of

the *Holway Report*, the bible of the IT industry, said that the millennium issue and the European single currency were driving IT staff shortages. "Almost everyone in the industry believes it will get worse. Everyone is investing in IT. There are tens of thousands of unfilled vacancies."

Mr Holway said that this demand was also driving huge rises in salaries - around 20 per cent.

The booming IT market had also resulted in a bid for IT stocks. Shares in the IT services industry - which includes Logica, Sema and FI - have risen a staggering 47 per cent over the last year. "The average price/earnings ratio in this industry is almost 30 times. A correction is overdue," said Mr Holway.

However, opportunities in IT for the survivors remained tremendous, he said. "We are talking about the problems of success. This is not the kind of story that anyone has written before - industry fails because there is too much work to do."

Others in the sector allayed fears about staff shortages. William Bittin, finance director at Sema, said: "I would be a liar if I said we have no problems finding good people. But it has not affected our business."

Paul Davies, chief executive of Parity, said the group was being protected by its IT recruitment agency. "Yes we are sensing a shortage, but it is not a problem for us because we have 2,000 freelancers on our database to draw on."



Disappointment: Andrew Teare, Rank chief executive, has encountered market scepticism in the last 18 months

Magnus Grimmond

Shares in Rank plunged 40.5p to 385p yesterday, their lowest for a year, after a downbeat trading statement from the Burtin's to Odeon cinemas group triggered a string of profits downgrades. Analysts shaved around £15m from forecasts for the current year on news of difficult underlying trading at the Hard Rock cafe chain, on which the group is pinning its hopes for the future, and a 25 per cent slump in video duplication volumes.

The market's expectation is that profits for the current year will now be some 5 per cent below previous estimates at around £315m, which would represent only modest growth from the previous year's underlying figure of £297m.

Rank downbeat on profits outlook

Rank said underlying turnover, excluding acquisitions, had grown by 1 per cent in the first five months of the year to May. Operating profit in continuing businesses was up 7 per cent, with higher profits at Hard Rock, holidays and leisure partly offset by lower results from film and entertainment services.

The trading statement accompanied a circular to shareholders announcing completion of the deal unveiled last week to sell the group's remaining 20 per

cent stake in the Rank Xerox copiers joint venture to Xerox of the US for up to £1bn. It is the latest disappointment to hit Andrew Teare, the chief executive brought in 18 months ago to revitalise the group. Despite proposals to return half the initial £500m payment from the Xerox deal to shareholders via a share buy-back, the initial euphoria which met last week's deal has quickly worn off.

Mr Teare plans to inject £1.5bn into the leisure business over the next five years, including one new Hard Rock outlet every month, but the market has been sceptical of Mr Teare's efforts so far. There was criticism of the £95.6m price paid for the Tom Cobbleigh pubs chain last year and there have been worries that, with £1bn to come from Xerox, he would be tempted to splash out on a big deal.

Rank said yesterday turnover and profits at Hard Rock were significantly higher in the latest period, but only as a result of contributions from acquisitions in North America.

Elsewhere, a quiet period for video releases meant duplication volumes sank by a quarter. London casino profits were also down due to a lower win ratio, while Burtin's has seen lower bookings.

Computer group suspended over accounts problem

Tom Stevenson
Financial Editor

Shares in the computer group Azlan were suspended yesterday in the light of "certain unresolved accounting issues which will have a material effect on the results" for the year to 5 April. Before the shares were frozen, they tumbled 30p to

555p, more than 200p lower than the all-time high they reached last summer.

The shares are to remain suspended until the publication of full-year figures, which were due to have been announced on June 26.

The company said it would make a further announcement as soon as possible but was unable to say when it would be able to issue its results.

A spokesman for Azlan said there was no evidence of impropriety or fraud. He added it was too early to quantify the impact of the accounting issues on the company's balance sheet. Yesterday's share price fall wiped £10m from Azlan's market value.

The unexpected announcement is Azlan's second embarrassing stumble in six months. In January it caused red faces at SBC Warburg when a £48.5m rights issue was taken up by just 0.56 per cent of its shareholders. Warburg was forced to subscribe for about 17.5 per cent of the issue in its role as primary underwriter for the cash call, while

its market-making arm took up almost 10 per cent more as a sub-underwriter.

The débâcle meant Warburg ended up owning more than 6 per cent of Azlan, acquired at the 620p rights price, well above yesterday's suspension price.

The rights issue was launched last November when the shares traded at 740p, close to their all-

time high. But they slumped soon afterwards, falling below the rights price and ensuring there would be no demand for the newly issued stock.

The cash call was announced to fund the company's biggest-ever deal, the £29.6m acquisition of Dutch group Akam International, and to strengthen its balance sheet.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	163.49	163.11	163.44	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Canada	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Germany	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
France	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Italy	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Japan	144.44	144.44	144.44	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Spain	163.49	163.49	163.49	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Belgium	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Netherlands	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Sweden	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Denmark	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Norway	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Switzerland	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Australia	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
South Africa	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
India	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Singapore	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
Argentina	163.49	163.49	163.49	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Brazil	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
China	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
India	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
Japan	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
South Africa	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28
UK	2.2577	2.2577	2.2577	1000	30.28	30.28	30.28

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; subtract from spot rate. Rates quoted low to high are at a premium; add to spot rate. "Dollar rates quoted are approximate." For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0899 123 5033. Calls cost 50p per minute.

Interest Rates

UK	6.50%	Germany	2.50%
Spain		Lombard	4.50%
France	3.15%	Canada	4.75%
Intervention		Discount	5.00%
Italy	7.5%	Denmark	3.25%
Netherlands			
Sweden	2.70%		

Bond Yields <small>as at 10/09/97</small>				
Country	5Yr	10Yr	7Yr	yield %
UK	7.0%	6.94	7.25%	7.04
US	6.85%	6.44	7.25%	6.85
Japan	6.50%	1.59	2.97%	2.54
Australia	10.0%	6.82	6.79%	7.25
Germany	8.0%	4.72	6.0%	5.71
France	4.75%	4.64	5.47%	5.64

Yields calculated on local basis.

Money Market Rates <small>as at 10/09/97</small>		
Country	Overnight	7 Day
UK	6.50%	6.50%

A ride Treasure for War

Photograph: David Rogers/Allsport

By way of avoiding that eventuality, the Gauteng provincial union is now pumping 125,000 Rand – almost £20,000 – into each of three senior Soweto clubs on an annual basis. School sides are allocated just over £4,000 a season and SARFU has coughed up over £300,000 to finance grounds in the Sowetan districts of Orlando and Dobsonville. It is not enough – nowhere near enough, in all probability – but it is a start.

As for Jabulani, money is arriving from a most unexpected direction. Having been identified by the Gauteng union as having “both passion and potential” for what was once an alien game, they are now being sponsored by Virgin Atlantic. The school's Under-19 side may even play in Britain next year – no mean experience for players who have never set foot outside Johannesburg.

The word Jabulani translates directly as “happiness”. Sowetan life is no bed of roses, but honest-to-goodness rugby men like Andrew Nkwana can at least afford the occasional smile.

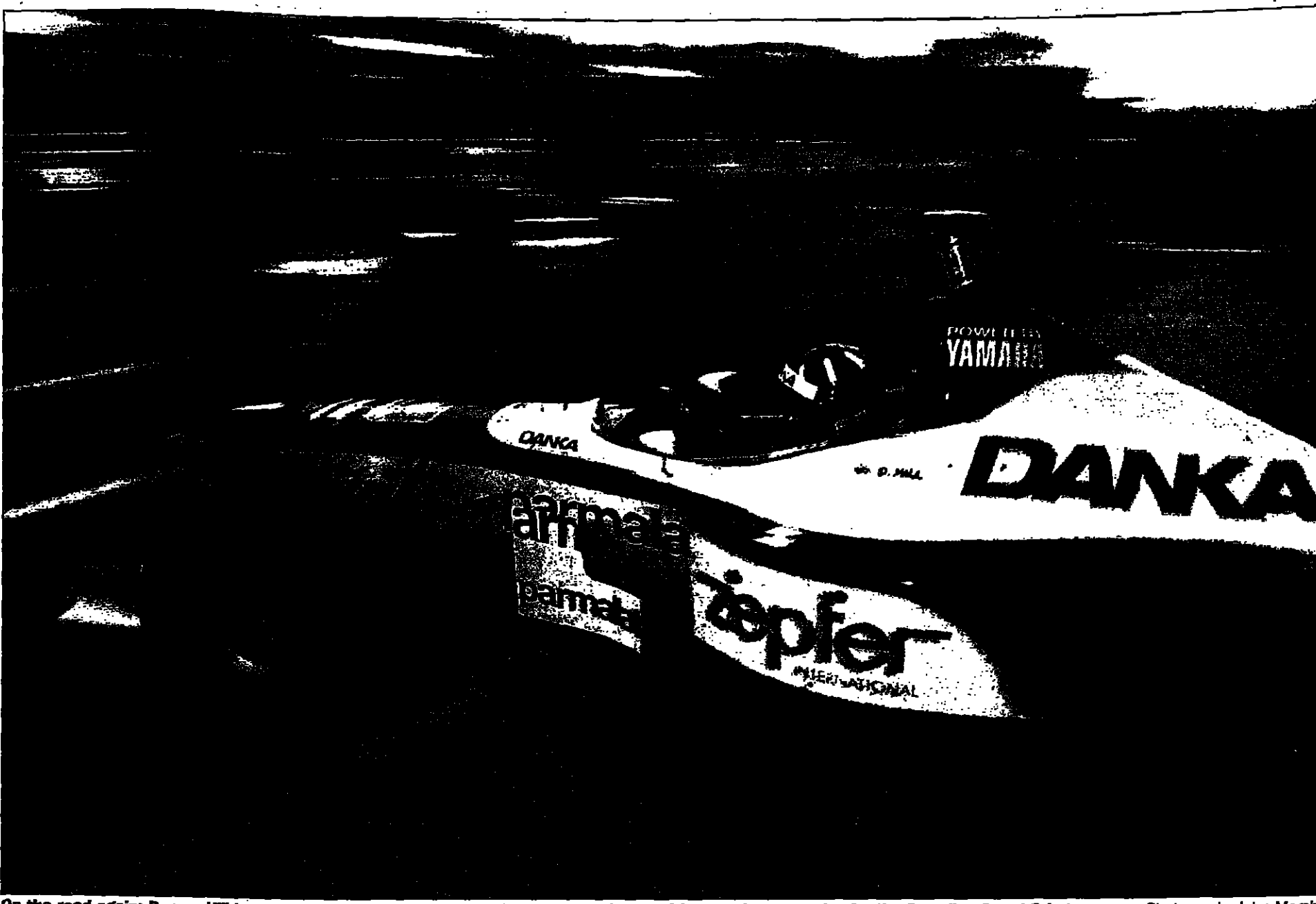
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973	983
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RSES RESULTS
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sport



On the road again: Damon Hill heads out on to the track in his TWR Arrows car during initial practice yesterday for the Canadian Grand Prix tomorrow. Photograph: John Marsh

Villeneuve keeps tongue in check

Motor racing
DAVID TREMAYNE
reports from Montreal

Jacques Villeneuve had the last laugh yesterday morning when he returned to his native Canada to set the fastest lap time during initial practice for tomorrow's Canadian Grand Prix on the circuit named after his late father.

The Canadian could have been forgiven for thinking more of his ongoing spat with Max Mosley, the president of FIA, the sport's governing body, than he was of his campaign this weekend. But he showed that he can compartmentalise his life by rising to the challenges of the Ferrari and his Williams teammate Heinz-Harald Frentzen.

When Ayrton Senna caught the red-eye flight from Brazil to

Italy in 1993 at the height of arguments with McLaren and Ford over engine supply, there were suggestions his erratic driving in the first practice session were the result of jetlag – and murmurs that anyone but the Brazilian champion might have been prevented from driving.

Villeneuve has little sense of history of his sport, but observers recalled Senna's situation when his successor at Williams was summoned from Canada to a meeting with Mosley in Paris on Wednesday. Villeneuve has had several verbal skirmishes with Mosley this season and is passionately opposed to Mosley's plans to change the regulations next season to incorporate treaded tyres in a move to slow cars down. Mosley had taken exception to comments attributed to Villeneuve last week in the German magazine *Der Spiegel*.

After testing a Williams to the new specification earlier this season, Villeneuve had said the proposed changes were "a joke, basically. It takes all the precision out of the driving. I think it's ridiculous to drive race cars like that."

And though he said he had no immediate plans to quit F1, he warned: "If it becomes boring to drive in F1, the best racing will probably end up being IndyCar, and it could have a big influence on decisions. The reason I'm racing is because I enjoy the racing and if that's taken away, just the money side isn't going to be enough to keep me for a long time. For a short period maybe."

"And I've heard some other drivers saying that as well, that they would probably look at the other side. You need to enjoy it. What's the fun this year is the ex-

tra grip you have. You really get a rush. Even in Argentina you could get a rush because of the extra speed and it has become fun. I think it's going to take more away from the driver and instead of still being the ultimate sport it is, it's going to become more of a travelling circus."

Asked if he and Mosley were still talking, he had snapped back: "Talking is one thing, listening is another."

Mosley responded in Monaco with a few punches of his own, accusing Villeneuve of believing that history began when he first stepped into an F1 car and that racing drivers of the past were inferior, but he took a dim view when *Der Spiegel* quoted Villeneuve as describing the current situation in F1 as "shit". Thus he had to return to Europe to explain himself, emerging with a reprimand and

the threat of more sanctions were he to repeat his offence.

At the start of each season drivers sign a document agreeing not to bring the sport into disrepute when they apply for the super-licence they need to race, and in the past both Alain Prost and Senna have received similar warnings.

The World Motor Sport Council stressed to Villeneuve that he had not been summoned because of his opinions but because he had expressed them in offensive terms. When he arrived back in Canada, Villeneuve promptly told a press conference: "I have no intention of changing my views, but perhaps I will express them in better language next time."

Insiders believe that Villeneuve's principal mistake was not so much to comment at all on the proposed regulations, but

to deride Mosley with the comment: "Max doesn't know what he is talking about because he has never driven a racing car." This was indeed a foolish *faux pas* because Mosley was in fact a competitor in the Formula Two race – one step below Formula One – at Hockenheim in 1968 in which Jim Clark was killed.

Villeneuve yesterday continued to drive with the aggressive determination that has earned him the lead in the World Championship, and continued to reiterate the need for some measure of risk in F1 if it is to be regarded as the pinnacle of the sport. And he pledged to remain outspoken.

"I don't think people should stop saying what they believe if they truly believe it," he said. There are a lot of people in F1 who would not disagree with that point of view.

Brundle fuels old passion

Derick Allsop meets the commentator back on track for the Le Mans 24-hour

Martin Brundle's return to Le Mans has triggered tragic and traumatic reminders that indulging a love affair in racing can come at a heavy price. The former grand prix driver, seemingly destined to become a distinguished television commentator, lines up in the 24-hour race tomorrow for the first time since his victory at the sports car classic in 1990.

The romance never faded but memories of the perils did – until he was back at La Sarthe last month for pre-qualifying. Brundle said: "It was quite a shock when I went round the circuit after seven years and, having been around sanitised Formula One circuits, to suddenly remember how fast and how dangerous the place is."

"I was intimidated to start with, and then a 21-year-old lad [Sebastien Enjolras of France] was killed in flames. It reminds you this is a man's race. A terrifying race."

It always was and the purists, many of them disenfranchised with modern grand prix racing, will tell you it must remain so. The purist in Brundle came to terms with the dangers to the extent that he hustled his Nissan around the 8.43-mile circuit substantially faster than any other driver. "It thrills me to drive quickly and get the best out of a car," he said. "I am doing Le Mans because I need to drive. I've been a racing driver for 25 consecutive years. I just can't give that up. And fun races wouldn't satisfy me. I am a competitive person and I'm seriously quick at the moment."

Question marks about Brundle's pace effectively led to his switch this season from the Jordan-Peugeot cockpit to the ITV commentary box. As well as the Le Mans programme, Brundle has occupied his time through taking an advisory and testing role with TWR Arrows, involvement with Silverstone and thriving car dealerships.

But relinquishing his Formula One seat has been a painful experience. "I was, to a certain extent, railroaded into the TV job," he said. "In hindsight I should have taken the Jordan drive whatever the financial deal was. But it was a trigger point to say 'if that's the best you can get, then stop'."

"I am hurting a bit, though. When I watch the cars and drivers out on the track now I honestly believe I am a better driver than half the field. Maybe that

means I stopped too soon; maybe it means I stopped at just the right time. I need to get over the urge for Formula One, I'm afraid. I am 38. How do I get back from here? The average age of a Formula One driver at the moment must be about 25."

"I've surprised myself with the TV because all I'd done was two or three guest appearances. But I find it very easy. I'm incredibly relaxed about it. I am fresh out of the cockpit and all I'm saying is what I'm seeing, and what I'm seeing is what I know."

"So many people have come up to me and said they'd been watching Formula One for years and thought they knew about it, but having listened to me they understand it so much better. That is the ultimate compliment."

"It's just that I have serious concerns my Formula One career was 12 years' apprenticeship for my TV career. It's very annoying but I think I've got more kudos from the little TV work I've done than from all my time racing grand prix cars."

Brundle is particularly proud of his maiden television interview, a one-to-one with Michael Schumacher. The German opened up with an insight into his braking and cornering techniques. What Brundle does not know is that Schumacher was unaware it was his former teammate's debut as an interviewer and he is kicking himself for missing out on a heaven-sent opportunity to wind him up.

This weekend Brundle hands over the microphone to another ex-partner and now IndyCar driver, Mark Blundell, for the Canadian Grand Prix, while he heads TWR Nissan's three-car, nine-driver assault on Le Mans.

Brundle said: "If we finish the race untroubled, I think we can win it. The reality is the programme has been so short. I think reliability will bite us. But there's no point in compromising your racing strategy just to finish. If you want to win Le Mans, you've got to drive flat out from start to finish. Somebody will, and win it. Nobody ever remembers who finished second. Who cares?"

"Also, to win Le Mans you've got to beat Porsche. I think the McLarens will be fast, but I suspect they will be a bit fragile, as we are," he added. "One of the sports prototypes should win but they don't have the works effort behind them. I would put my money on a works GT1 Porsche."

Leagues end the isolation

Baseball

In Arlington, Texas, a National League team won the first interleague game in baseball history on Thursday.

Stan Javier homered and hit a tiebreaking double in the seventh inning, leading Mark Gardner and the San Francisco Giants past the Texas Rangers 4-3 before a sell-out crowd of 46,507.

The history-making night began with Darren Oliver throwing a low, inside fastball to Darryl Hamilton, ending the separation between leagues that traditionalists had preserved for more than century.

Hamilton followed with the first hit three pitches later, but the first double play took him off the bases – which were painted with a "First Interleague Game" logo. Players also wore interleague patches.

Javier, who has played nine seasons in the AL, homered in the third. His RBI double off Oliver (3-8) put the Giants ahead 4-3 in the seventh.

Gardner (7-2), who pitched for the first time since 22 May, Rod Beck pitched a scoreless ninth for his NL-leading 20th save, even though this one came against an AL team.

In Oakland, California, a rivalry previously confined to the World Series unfolded for the first time in the regular season as the Oakland Athletics, behind consecutive pinch hits by Patrick Lennan and George Williams, beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 5-4.

The Dodgers and A's met for the first time since Los Angeles defeated Oakland in the 1988 World Series. The teams also played in the 1974 Series, with the A's winning.

Dave Telgelder (2-3), who missed his last turn in the rotation because of a finger blister, helped the A's score one for the AL. He went 6 1-3 innings, allowing four runs, Billy Taylor struck out two in a perfect ninth for his 12th save.

Friendships on hold in clash of the Kiwis

Near-contemporaries and near-neighbours who rank among the best half-backs in the world will stage a reunion at Oldell this evening.

Bradford's Robbie Paul and Auckland's Stacey Jones were born within a couple of months of each other 21 years ago and played with and against each other during their formative years in New Zealand. "I knew him all the way through our school days and we've played in teams together since we were nippers," says Jones, whose virtuoso performance for the Warriors at St Helens last week had many in England hailing him as the best scrum-half in the world.

Frank Endacott, coach of both Auckland and New Zealand, and previously the Junior Kiwis, knows the duo well. "I had the pleasure of watching them both right through the Auckland representative teams, and they were always two very talented young players. But Stacey was always the scrum-half; he was always that little bit ahead."

Endacott believes Jones is still ahead of the game now that he is playing against the best senior half-backs



Two world-class half-backs from New Zealand will be renewing old rivalries in the World Club Championship tonight. Dave Hadfield outlines the similar paths Auckland's Stacey Jones (left) and Bradford's Robbie Paul (right) have taken

on a regular basis. "Stacey is as good as any scrum-half in the world at the moment," he says. "He has marked Allan Langer and Ricky Stuart recently and lost nothing by comparison with either of them."

"There are likenesses between him and Robbie, but Stacey has the greater speed while Robbie is a bit more unorthodox."

That is Paul's strength but, to some eyes, also his weakness. He goes his own inimitable way on the field while Jones is the more structured, team-oriented player. "He can play more or less anywhere," Jones says of his Bradford counterpart. "He's going to go on to bigger things – but I suppose I don't want that to be a scrum-half."

Endacott has already united the two at full international level, bringing on Paul as a substitute to play stand-off outside Jones in the recent Test against Australia in Sydney. "He went very well; he made a difference," Endacott says. "I think he could play scrum-half or stand-off for New Zealand, but he also has all the attributes of a world-class hooker."

"I was also very impressed by the way he fitted in with the side. He's a very confident person for his age and, like his brother Henry, he's got plenty to say for himself. I reckon the pair of them could talk under water."

The Bradford fans' conviction that Paul can walk on water took a slight denting last Monday in the Kiwi's first game since recovering from the foot injury that ruined his Wembley. "He looked a bit rusty against Penrith," Endacott says. "He wasn't at his best, but fully fit he is a handful for anyone."

Paul has been having physiotherapy on the foot in a bid to be fully functional against his fellow countrymen. "He is one of the danger men as far as we are concerned, but we will put pressure on him from the start, as we did on Bobbie Goulding," Endacott says. That win over Goulding's Saints has given Auckland a confidence that eluded them throughout a six-match losing streak before they came to Britain. "I know people were surprised by the way we played at Saints after a record like that," Jones says. "But it wasn't as



though we were playing badly. All our games were like the Bradford-Penrith game, with us playing the role of Bradford – doing everything right and then just losing at the end."

"It was tough for Robbie, because he's the captain of Bradford and he probably has a lot more responsibility than me. I just go out and try to do my job to the best of my ability."

Any criticism of Jones has been the precise opposite of that occasionally levelled at Paul – that his ability has been submerged by the need to play within a system. "But we've changed the way we've played over the last few weeks," says Endacott of the looser and freer style they have adopted since he took over from John Monie as the Warriors' coach.

Given the licence to roam, Jones has added a little of Paul's unpredictability to his game. It makes him an even more complete player than when the two used to team up together as schoolboys, and Bradford know that the player they snatched from under the Warriors' noses must outshine him if their side is to win this evening.

Bell wiser for defeats

Adelaide Rams 34
Leeds Rhinos 8

Leeds Rhinos fly home from Adelaide today sadder but wiser. Their World Club Championship hopes are in tatters after yesterday's 34-8 defeat by Adelaide Rams, but the Rhinos are determined to push Bradford Bulls all the way when the Super League resumes on 29 June.

For the second successive week the Rhinos were thoroughly outplayed and, after their 42-20 loss to North Queensland last Saturday, they leave Australia without a win. Leeds went into the break yesterday just four points in arrears, 8-4 down, but finished the match on the wrong end of a six-try drubbing.

Their chances were not helped by full-back Damian Gibson spending 10 minutes in the sin bin soon after the break for a professional foul and then substitute Terry Newton being sent off in the 63rd minute for an alleged spear tackle on the

Adelaide second-rower, David Boughton.

"We have no excuses, we were outplayed," said the Leeds captain, Gary Mercer. "They were the better side. We'll head back to England and concentrate on that." Second-placed Leeds, who play Bradford Bulls at Headingley in their first game back, can still catch the leaders, who have a seven-point lead going into the final eight rounds.

Their coach Dean Bell said that, like most of the British clubs, Leeds were on a learning curve and were returning to England with added knowledge. "There is a huge gap to bridge and playing the Aussie clubs is one way of improving our own standards. The defeats have hurt – but they have taught us a lot. We've got to keep playing them and learning."

Adelaide was hit by torrential rain in the hours before kick-off, and the Rhinos appeared to handle the wet and slippery conditions better than their hosts during the opening exchanges. They were quick to seize the ini-

tiative after a Rams mistake in the second minute. The prop Barrie McDermott opened up the Adelaide defence and sent scrum-half Ryan Sheridan on a 40-metre run to the posts.

Leeds' Harris attempted conversion but one of the upstarts and bounced away.

It was a brief hurrah for Leeds. In the ninth minute, hooker Kerrod Walters, who had been singled out by Bell as a real threat to the Rhinos, found a gap in the visitors' defence. He fed the ball to the loose forward Cameron Blair, who then set up centre Chris Quinn for the first try. Once Leeds were reduced to 12 players, holding the Adelaide onslaught proved an exercise in futility.

The Rams are looking for a big score against Oldham next weekend to put them in the box seat for the one Australian spot from Pool B in the finals series. Adelaide players: Walters, Quinn, Harris, McDermott, Farrell, Morley, Mercer. Referee: S. Clark.

Wigan look to history as they seek more glory Down Under

DAVE HADFIELD

Wigan carry Britain's credibility into battle once more in the second round of World Club Championship matches, with their coach, Eric Hughes, spurred on by an extra incentive. The only British winners last weekend have an even tougher task this time – taking on the Australian Super League leaders, Brisbane Broncos, in their own backyard.

But Wigan have the encouragement of knowing that they have done it before. In 1994, a below-strength side of whom only six members now remain at the club went to ANZ Stadium and defied the odds to win. "As they had already beaten Wigan in Britain, that made it one piece and there's a lot of talk about this being the decider," said Hughes from the team's base on the Gold Coast yesterday. "There's a lot of responsibility on us again, but I

think that all British clubs carry that responsibility."

"I'm a great believer in this tournament, because in the long-term it's going to equip our players with the intensity to play 80 minutes, week in, week out. But if we want there to be a long-term, we have to earn as much credibility as we can this year."

Hughes' own credibility has increased by leaps and bounds over the last few weeks. Widely seen as a stop-gap appointment at Wigan after the sacking of Graeme West, he now looks suspiciously like the front-runner for the Great Britain coaching job when it is decided in August – and he confirmed yesterday that it is a role he would relish. "It would be a lie if I said I wouldn't be interested," he said. "I was ambitious as a player and I'm the same as a coach. I would love to take the challenge on and, if the offer came, I would jump at it."

Victory over the Broncos on Monday would surely underline

Hughes' credentials. He expects to have a full squad available, with Terry O'Connor back after an ankle injury to complicate his selection.

In today's matches, Bradford take on Auckland without the injured Jon Scales, although the long-term casualties Sonny Nickle and Bernard Dwyer could be ready to play a part. Their opponents have Anthony Swann suspended and replace him with Shane Endacott, with Logan Swann on the bench. There is also a slight doubt about Marc Ellis.

On the other side of the world today, Oldham begin their tournament by playing North Queensland Cowboys, as do Sheffield tomorrow against Perth Reds. Warrington, at home to Penrith tomorrow, have Warren Stevens back at prop, while Halifax go to Canterbury hoping to shake off the humiliation of their 70-point defeat by Canberra, who host London Broncos.

Drummond is quick off the blocks

Athletics

Five American 100m sprinters, led by Jon Drummond's 9.92 seconds, breached the 10-second mark at the US championships in Indianapolis, while Marion Jones produced the year's fastest two women's 100m times, dominating the semi-finals in 10.92sec after running 10.95sec in her opening race.

Headwinds slowed the pace in the men's semi-finals, where Dennis Mitchell was eliminated after finishing sixth. The top three finishers in the finals earn a place on the US squad for August's World Championships in Athens.

The shot put final saw an impressive display from Randy Barnes, the world record holder, who decided the competition with a put of 22.03m, the best this year. The world champion, John Godina, missed a chance to defend his title, finishing fourth at 20.49m.

Steve Fritz, fourth in the Atlanta Olympics, won the decathlon with 8,604 points, the second-best mark of the year, while Kelly Blair was first in the heptathlon with a lifetime best of 6,465 points.

The American men had not been among the year's top-five 100m runners until Maurice Greene's 9.95sec opening heat. Only Thinklad's Ato Boldon, at 9.89 sec, had run faster. Drummond came even closer to Boldon's mark with 9.92 in the third heat. Kareem Streete-Thompson was second at 9.95sec. Also under 10 seconds were Mike Marsh, the 1992 Olympic 200m champion and the winner of the fourth heat in 9.97, and Tim Montgomery, the fifth-heat winner at 9.96.

The wind shifted into the runners' faces before the men's semi-finals and times slowed. Marsh ran 10.13sec and Drummond clocked 10.1. Greene led the second semi-final in 10.08.

Gail Devers, the 1992 Olympic champion, nearly matched Marion Jones by running 10.95sec in a later heat.

Elliott enjoys batting practice

Nottinghamshire 239
Australia 398-5 dec
Match drawn

Matthew Elliott and Steve Waugh took advantage of the batting practice available in this rain ruined match at Trent Bridge by scoring large centuries as Australia played out a draw against Nottinghamshire yesterday.

A true contest was impossible after the first day was washed out, and the match ended in similar style when light rain brought an early end with Michael Bevan and Adam Gilchrist unbeaten on 75 and nine, respectively.

Elliott, who has batted consistently well for the tourists so far this summer, hit his second century of the tour, eventually falling for 127, while Waugh, standing in as captain, scored 115 - his highest score in five first-class innings.

Elliott maintained his concentration despite two frustrating rain breaks in the first hour, and put together a flawless 212-ball innings in four-and-a-half hours, including 14 boundaries and a six. He was finally undone by Usman Afzali, bowled as he wandered down the wicket to the left-arm spinner.

Michael Slater, opening, and Ricky Ponting, who came in at 86.3, failed to make the most of their opportunity to stake claims for Test call-ups. Slater fell for 14 on Thursday, and Ponting went the same way for 16 off the fifth ball yesterday.

One ball after Ponting's dismissal the rain came and with it the first of the interruptions that frustrated the Australian batsmen.

Yorkshire punished by Stewart

Cricket

DAVID LLEWELLYN
reports from The Oval
Surrey 549
Yorkshire 226-4

For long moments in a long afternoon it looked as if David Byas was going to restore a certain degree of balance to affairs here yesterday.

After Alec Stewart's monumental and magnificent unbeaten 271 appeared to have given Surrey a huge advantage, Byas adopted a pragmatic approach as Yorkshire set about grinding their way back into this match. But like Martyn Moxon before him, the Yorkshire captain perished just when he had passed his half century, and much will now depend on their third half-century, Darren Lehmann.

Both senior men fell victim to the wiles of Surrey's Pakistan Test off-spinner, Saqlain Mushtaq. Moxon pushed forward to the arm ball and Chris Lewis snatched the first of his two sharp catches. Byas prodded forward similarly and went the same way. When Saqlain had Bradley Parker caught next delivery by Mark Butcher at silly point with a ball that turned the other way, the imbalance had been reasserted by the home side.

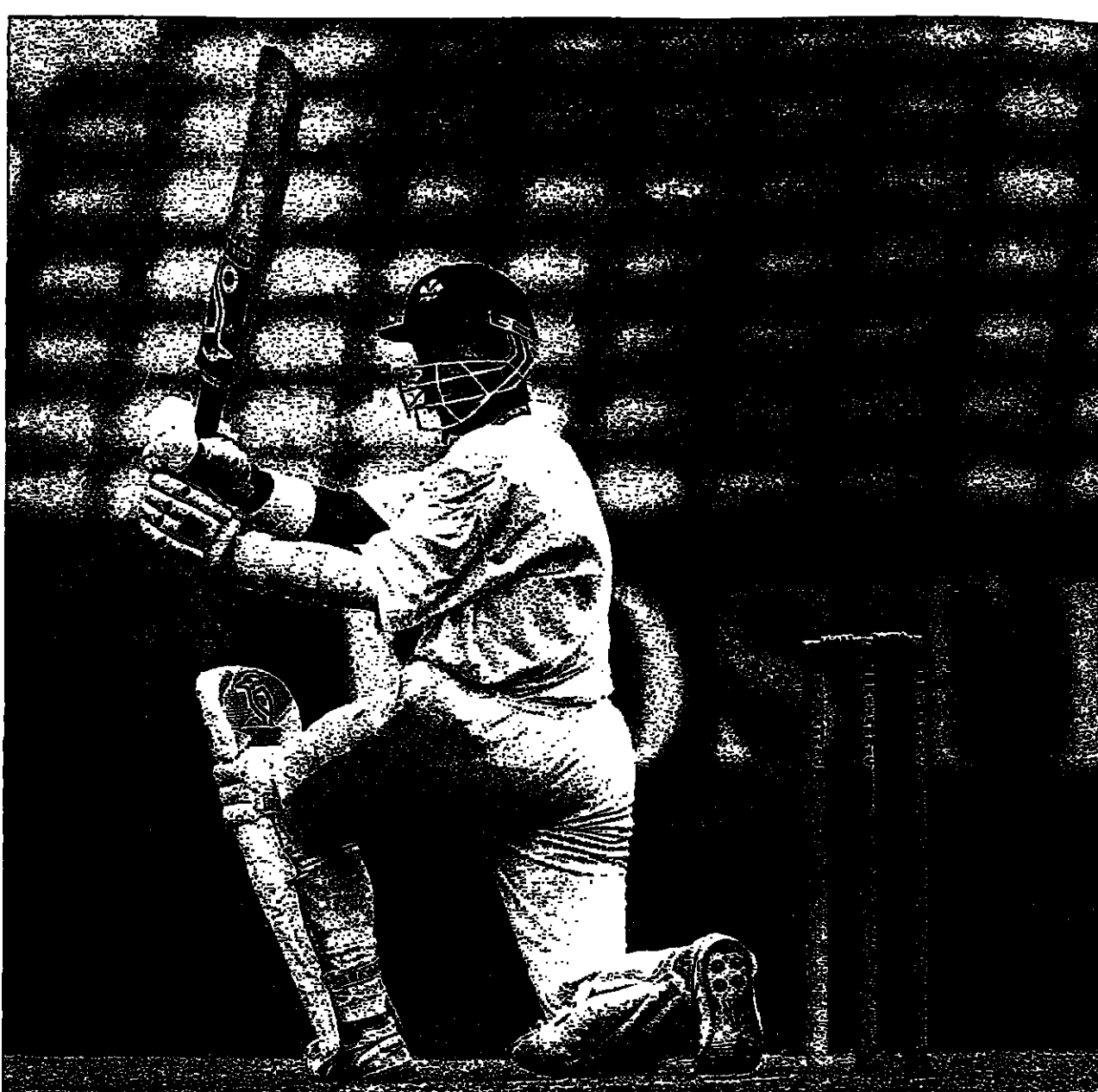
Stewart had left a raft of records bobbing about in his wake. It was his career best, beating the previous mark of 206 not out made against Essex in 1989; the highest first-class score by any batsman this season; the highest score by any

present Surrey professional (David Ward, who made 294 against Derbyshire in 1994, has left the county); the second highest score by a Surrey player against Yorkshire, behind Tom Hayward's 273 in 1899; and the third double hundred against Yorkshire by a Surrey batsman. It also equalled the 15th highest individual Surrey score in first-class cricket and surpassed his father Mickey's highest score of 227 not out (against Middlesex in 1964).

There were some minor gems on the team front. It was the seventh time Surrey have scored more than 500 runs against Yorkshire and equalled the total made on the only occasion they have achieved the feat away from The Oval, matching the 549 they amassed at Lord's in 1914.

When he resumed on his overnight 200, Stewart looked prepared to double his score. Unfortunately he needed his partners to stick around and they did not. Ian Salisbury went in the second over of the morning and although Martin Bicknell helped put on 54, as did the last man, Joey Benjamin, Stewart - and Surrey - needed more.

Once past 250 Stewart opened up, realising that time - and Benjamin's luck - was running out. A couple more glorious drives, one straight, the other through cover, preceded an amazing six, when Stewart helped a wide ball on its way to the boundary over backward point's head. There was one final Benjamin swing for four before White bowled him.



Record breaker: Alec Stewart on his way to an unbeaten 271 at The Oval yesterday

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Moles makes DeFreitas suffer

JON CULLEY

reports from Edgbaston
Warwickshire v Derbyshire

Day two at Derbyshire's new captain, Phillip DeFreitas, discovered, was barely better than day one. Warwickshire, batting on the whole with a good deal more respect for their opponents exhibited, have overtaken Derbyshire's total of 200 for the loss of three wickets, creating a platform on which they will hope to build substantially today.

They suffered an early setback when Nick Knight was fully caught a wayward ball from Devon Malcolm outside off-stump and gave the wicket-keeper, Karl Kricken, the first

of his three catches. It was not a stroke that a man wishing to regain his England place would want to be seen playing. Happily for Warwickshire, Knight's example was not followed.

Andy Moles and David Hemp applied themselves solidly to the job in hand for the next two and a half hours to add 124, making a pitch on which all but one of Derbyshire's batsmen had seemed decidedly uncomfortable now appear quite benign.

Hemp moved to Edgbaston during the winter from Glamorgan, where his career had lost momentum after a serious injury. He did not look much of an acquisition to begin with but has struck a rich seam of form of late, making three centuries in the space of four Championship innings before this match.

To these he added 60 yesterday, collecting half a dozen fours and a six before DeFreitas, the best of Derbyshire's bowlers, deceived him enough to get an edge as he attempted to cut. Moles, who batted for more than six hours in making 160 at Southampton in Warwickshire's last match, was more impressive still, striking 13 fours and deserving better than to be out for 83. Technically, Moles is as sound as they come and he allies this to the powers of concentration vital to building long innings, a combination one appreciates all the more in the knowledge that he has recently inherited a family tendency towards diabetes.

He gave a sharp chance to first slip on 66, which he survived, but it did not look as though De-

Freitas would find a way to prevent the 36-year-old opener completing the 30th century of his 11-year first-class career until Kricken pounced for his third catch as Moles tried to nudge the ball towards third man, bringing to an end an occupation this time spanning three hours and 41 minutes.

Derbyshire, their heads doubtless still spinning from the dramatic departure of their erstwhile captain, Dean Jones, will need a good start today if this is not to be another match that slips out of their reach.

Somerset's coach, Dermot Reeve, is considering making a comeback to play one-day cricket next summer. The 34-year-old was forced to retire as a player for Warwickshire last year because of an arthritic hip.

Hampshire hit by Shine

ADAM SZRETER

reports from Basingstoke
Hampshire v Somerset

Something approaching normal service threatened to resume yesterday following Thursday's mutiny at May's Bounty, when 16 wickets fell in the day. But Kevin Shine's late burst of 3 for 1 in 16 balls swung the match violently in Somerset's favour after Hampshire's openers had appeared to put the hosts on top.

The pitch, slightly rough-looking, has assumed enigmatic proportions with the occasional one rearing off a length but no throat-balls or shooters for anyone to blame.

Somerset, resuming on 79 for 6, added 80 for the last four wickets in the morning, thanks mainly to a partnership of 57 between Piran Holloway and Andy Caddick. Holloway, who kept his head and his wicket intact amid the previous day's carnage, remained watchful to the last, while Caddick, with the confidence of Test success cours-

ing through him, struck straight and true, including one massive six off Shaun Udal.

Caddick finally fell to John Stephenson for 38, defending his wicket with his front pad once too often for the liking of the umpire, Anthony Clark, and Kevan James wrapped up the innings three balls later by trapping his former Hampshire team mate Shine leg before for no score. James finished with 5 for 44, just rewards for some polish seam bowling, while Holloway was left undefeated on 73.

After lunch Jason Loney and Matthew Hayden set about the Somerset bowling with some purpose. Hayden, anxious to atone for his first ball duck on Thursday, opened his broad shoulders with a series of fine drives, while Loney matched the Australian stroke for stroke, including the second big six of the day, off Mushtaq Ahmed. But then Loney attempted to deposit a ball from Graham Rose to similarly distant parts and became the next batsman to be out lbw after his cross-batted swing had failed to connect.

Following an opening stand of 73, Hampshire then struggled as wickets fell. First James was caught behind pushing forward to Rose; then Hayden was surprised by one from Keith Parsons, in his first over, that pitched in the rough outside the left-hander's off-stump and bounced up disconcertingly. Hayden edged it to first slip but such was his bemusement that he waited for the umpire's finger to go up before walking off.

That was a blow to Hampshire, and another came shortly after tea when Robin Smith, who has looked in no sort of form, played forward to Mushtaq, but was beaten and struck on the back pad - 131 for 4.

Stephenson and Will Kendall attempted to steady the ship, but then Shine took a hand. First he had Kendall caught at second slip, Stephenson followed caught behind and Udal edged the very next ball to Bowler to put Shine on a hat-trick. Dimitri Mascarenhas kept it out, but he did not last long and became the 12th batsman in the match to be given out lbw, this time to Rose.

Phillips' patience frustrates Lancashire

The Kent paceman Ben Phillips scored his maiden County Championship century to frustrate Lancashire at Old Trafford yesterday, hitting nine fours in a patient innings that lasted 209 balls, after coming in at No 7 when Kent were 135 for 5.

He shared lower-order stands with frontline batsman Alan Wells (65), then Paul Strang (43) and captain Steve Marsh (24) continued the habit of providing runs from unlikely quarters for Kent this season. The visitors were finally bowled out for 373, with Phillips

still unbeaten on 100. Kent then continued their progress by reducing Lancashire to 113 for 5 at close, the home side losing England captain Mike Atherton for just five.

Lancashire announced yesterday that they are to face their Roses rivals, Yorkshire, in a floodlit match with a difference at Old Trafford. The game, which will start at 3.30pm and finish at around 11.15pm on 21 July, will be played over 50 overs - but the two sides will bat for 25 overs at a time. Players will wear

coloured clothing and will be accompanied by rock music when they walk out to bat.

Lancashire are expecting a crowd of over 10,000 for the game, which has prize money of £10,000.

Pakistan edged past New Zealand yesterday with a 16-run victory to reach the final of the three-nation one-day tournament being played in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad. Pakistan lost key batsmen Saeed Anwar, Shahid Afridi, Rameez Raja and Saleem Malik early in the game, but Mo-

Khan's brilliant 103 off 87 balls and Inzamam-ul-Haq's 79 off 72 helped them to score a comfortable 306 for seven.

New Zealand lost three wickets in the first two overs to Azhar Mahmood's accurate bowling, but Mark Greatbatch led the Kiwi fightback with 102 off 106 balls. However, New Zealand were all out for 290 in 48 overs.

India and Pakistan, who have both won a match each against New Zealand, will play the last round-robin league match and then meet in Monday's final.

Gosling's day to forget

Sailing
STUART ALEXANDER

The fortunes of the reigning world champion Adam Gosling took a knock in the Hackett Etchells National Championships yesterday. Sailed in near perfect conditions in Christchurch Bay, Gosling, who has persuaded the other half of Annabel Croft, Mel Tolman, to dig out his racing oilskins again, was leading after the first two completed races on Wednesday.

Yesterday's first race he was again in the money, scoring a second but, in the next two, the last being a result of the opening race abandoned in Wednesday's fog, he slipped down the order. He had been pipped in the first race by Graham Bailey, who was always in the top four, and it is Bailey who goes into the final race today with a three and half point cushion over Poul-Ricard Hoj-Jensen, who won the final race. Behind Gosling in third-place is Eddie Warwick.

Desperately trying to kick his championship hopes alive is Tim Law, who had to scramble to avoid staking after being holed in a collision ahead of the start of the second race. He is asking for average points and is trying to repair his yacht overnight.

Ambrose on the warpath

TONY COZIER

reports from Antigua
West Indies v Sri Lanka

Curley Ambrose persecuted the Sri Lankan batsmen on a venomous pitch on the opening day of the first Test here yesterday before a partnership of rare skill and courage between Sanath Jayasuriya and captain Arjuna Ranatunga lifted the threat of a disastrous collapse.

The first Test between the teams in the Caribbean saw Sri Lanka recover from 23 for 3 to 119 for 3 early in the afternoon session. Jayasuriya was 71 and Ranatunga 31.

Courtney Walsh, the West Indies' captain, had no hesitation in sending Sri Lanka in to bat on a pitch still unusually moist from the late pre-match preparation.

The ferocious Ambrose, charging in with the Viv Richards Pavilion at his back and cheered on by his fellow Antiguan, dispatched the opener Roshan Mahanama in the 11th over, the left-handed Russell Arnold next ball, and then the dangerous Aravinda de Silva. The elongated fast bowler was virtually unplayable as the ball lifted steeply and moved off the seam to the consternation of the batsmen.

Ambrose, who had not taken a Test wicket since the third match of the preceding series against India six weeks and 38 overs ago, was stalled frustrat-

ingly on 295 Test wickets, but within 40 minutes here he was only two wickets away from becoming the fourth West Indian with 300 in Tests.

Mahanama prodded at the leg-cutter to be caught at the wicket and Arnold's tentative prod deflected a catch to third slip. De Silva, coming off consecutive hundreds in his last three Tests, attempted an entirely inappropriate back-foot stroke which lobbed a catch to cover before he had scored.

Jayasuriya began with a flourish, hoisting Ian Bishop for six over square leg in the second over, but he had to endure the pain of several blows on the body, inevitable on such a surface. Three times the Sri Lankan medical corps was obliged to come to his aid on the field after he was rapped on the glove and on the box by Ambrose, and on the grille of the helmet by Bishop.

When Jayasuriya was on 36 he offered a stiff chance to Sherwin Campbell at gully off Bishop, but nothing could deflect him from his purpose and, when Bishop shortened outside the off-stump, he square cut the ball out of the ground into adjoining Independence Avenue. It was a remarkable blow.

The influence of the hot sun during lunch seemed to ease the pitch and batting became easier during the early part of the afternoon against an attack which lost its edge while Ambrose was rested.

CRICKET SCOREBOARD

Brittania Assurance County Championship (Second day of four)

Gloucestershire v Middlesex

CARROW: Gloucestershire (first), with five first-class wickets standing, are 57 runs ahead of Gloucestershire (2), today: 11.0.

Gloucestershire won toss

GLoucestershire - First innings (Overnight: 272 for 6)

S D Thomas not out 11

S L Westcott & Brown & Johnson 4

Extras (10.9 lbw not out) 40

Total (82 overs) 281

Middlesex - First innings (Overnight: 272 for 6)

P N Wickett & Thomas & Wickett 3

S L Westcott & Brown & Johnson 4

Extras (10.9 lbw not out) 40

Total (82 overs) 281

Middlesex won toss

Middlesex - First innings (Overnight: 272 for 6)

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S L Westcott & Brown & Johnson 4

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P N Wickett & Thomas & Wickett 3

S L Westcott & Brown & Johnson 4

Extras (10.9 lbw not out) 40

Total (82 overs) 281

Warwickshire v Somerset

BASINGSTOKE: Warwickshire (first), with six first-class wickets standing, require 235 runs to beat Hampshire (2), today: 11.0.

Warwickshire won toss

Warwickshire - First innings (Overnight: 79 for 6)

P C L Haines not out 73

S L Westcott & Brown & Johnson 4

Extras (10.9 lbw not out) 40

Total (82 overs) 281

Somerset - First innings (Overnight: 79 for 6)

P C L Haines not out 73

S L Westcott & Brown & Johnson 4

Extras (10.9 lbw not out) 40

Total (82 overs) 281

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P C L Haines not out 73

S L Westcott & Brown & Johnson 4

Extras (10.9 lbw not out) 40

Total (82 overs) 281

Surrey v Yorkshire

THE OVAL: Yorkshire (first), with six first-class wickets standing, are 228 runs ahead of Derbyshire (2), today: 11.0.

Surrey won toss

Surrey - First innings (Overnight: 428 for 6)

I D K Salisbury & Lehmann 2

S L Westcott & Brown & Johnson 4

Extras (10.9 lbw not out) 40

Total (82 overs) 281

Yorkshire - First innings (Overnight: 428 for 6)

P C L Haines not out 73

S L Westcott & Brown & Johnson 4

Extras (10.9 lbw not out) 40

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Total (82 overs) 281

Yorkshire - First innings (Overnight: 428 for 6)

P C L Haines not out 73

S L Westcott & Brown & Johnson 4

Extras (10.9 lbw not out) 40

Total (82 overs) 281

Warwickshire v Derbyshire

EDGBASTON: Warwickshire (first), with seven first-class wickets standing, are nine runs ahead of Derbyshire (2), today: 11.0.

Warwickshire won toss

Warwickshire - First innings (Overnight: 428 for 6)

I D K Salisbury & Lehmann 2

S L Westcott & Brown & Johnson 4

Extras (10.9 lbw not out) 40

Total (82 overs) 281

Derbyshire - First innings (Overnight: 428 for 6)

P C L Haines not out 73

S L Westcott & Brown & Johnson 4

Extras (10.9 lbw not out) 40

Total (82 overs) 281

Warwickshire won toss



Lions spread word
Chris Hewett on rugby's new frontier, page 26

sport

Reiffel really at home
Guy Hodgson on the Australian bowler happy to be here, page 30

Internet threat to Wimbledon ticket controls

NICK HARRIS

Wimbledon is investigating attempts by American ticket agencies to get around the All England Club's strict rules on the re-sale of tickets for this summer's championships by selling seats on the Internet.

One company, based in Arizona, is selling tickets for the opening Monday of the championships, with a face value of £22, for £372. Tickets for the first Saturday, priced at £32, are

being offered for £559 and tickets for the men's final, with a face value of £54, are being sold for nearly £900 each.

Since 1989, the Wimbledon authorities have forbidden the re-sale of all tickets except debenture seats, allocated to those who have invested in five-year bonds that have helped fund the All England Club's development programme.

This has led to a thriving resale market in debenture seats, with many holders legitimately making huge profits, but the

tickets being offered by the American agencies are non-debenture tickets and the Wimbledon authorities are making enquiries to discover the source of the tickets and stop the trade in them.

"These organisations are being investigated to see what, if any, action can be taken," a Wimbledon spokesman said. He added that anyone arriving at the tournament with tickets not bought directly through official sources - either via the official ballot, through tennis

clubs or by queuing on the day - would be refused admission if discovered. Last year, regular random checks on one day found a party of 40 people with such tickets, and they were turned away and had their tickets confiscated.

The Arizona-based agency carries a message on its web-site which reads: "The price of non-debenture seating makes a trip to Wimbledon affordable. However we cannot guarantee that

Wimbledon officials will not question the origin of your tickets." Although the agency also states that non-debenture tickets will not be sold to British residents, it is continuing to advertise and sell tickets via electronic credit-card transactions.

In order to prevent the re-sale of non-debenture tickets in Britain, the Wimbledon authorities have taken out adverts in national newspapers which warn potential buyers

against purchasing non-debenture tickets.

A Wimbledon spokesman said that any agency or person found breaching the rules may be liable to legal action and would be stopped from buying Wimbledon tickets in the future. He added that agencies using the Internet presented more of a problem, however. "The Club do all they can to stop such sales," he said. "The problem is that the Internet is not regulated and therefore all regulation falls to Wimbledon."

The spokesman said that court orders from Britain, which might be used to stop the trade, were not valid in Arizona. He added that the All England Club was seeking other means of preventing the trade. "The matter is in the hands of our solicitors," he said.

Another ticket agency, based in San Francisco, said that it was able to provide non-debenture seats for all areas of centre court for all the days of the tournament, and that there was no shortage of tickets. "A

dozen or more on any day will be no problem," a spokesman said. He added: "These tickets come from Wimbledon members and from people who've got them from tennis clubs and the like."

A third agency, based in Alabama, is offering discounts on the bulk purchase of non-debenture tickets. A spokesman said: "I can get you 50 each day if you need them." He added: "If you buy a lot, I can get you a discount on them."

Two together, page 29

US OPEN: American wonder boy rediscovers his touch but an electrical storm interrupts his advance on leader Montgomerie

Woods starts to claw his way back

ANDY FARRELL

reports from Bethesda, Maryland

Tiger Woods set out to prove that anything Colin Montgomerie can do, the boy wonder of golf might also be capable of achieving in the second round of the US Open. When an electrical storm interrupted play, Woods had fought his way back to level par, still five behind Monty, by picking up four shots on the day.

Woods, who started the final round of the Masters with a nine-stroke lead, had given himself a deficit of a similar amount with a 74 in the first round. The so-called "Mozart of the Greens" was more reminiscent of Beethoven on a bad hearing day as he struggled to hit the required number of fairways and greens, most spectacularly at the par-three 18th. His seven-iron rebounded off the bank in front of the green into the pond, making the sort of splash he had not intended.

Having gone to the turn in four-under, a mark also reached by Scott Dunlap and the 1994 champion, Ernie Els, Woods was on course to match Montgomerie's opening 65 until he bogeyed the 16th. The suspension in play came with Woods on the 17th tee and Montgomerie eight minutes away from teeing off at the first. The Scot still held a one-shot lead over Hal Sutton, who was also due off later in the day, and Tom Lehman, one of Woods' playing partners, who had picked up one stroke on the day.

Whatever consultations Woods had with his coach, Butch Harmon, on Thursday evening, the remedy seemed to work until, appropriately enough for the date, the 13th. There, Woods found rough and sand for his first bogey, but responded with birdies at the next two. His second at the 15th

was pulled into the crowd, but after a free drop, a fine chip set up his four, only for him to fail to get up and down for a par at the next.

Some early morning rain freshened what was otherwise another muggy day and helped make the greens obligingly receptive. Dunlap, in his second year on tour made six birdies in his first 13 holes, only to bogey two of the last three for a 66 which took him to one over. "Any moisture makes the course more playable," Dunlap said.

Any suggestion that Woods was about to miss his first cut in nine months as a professional were dismissed with his start. He birdied the first from six feet, the third from four feet, and the fifth and the seventh from three feet. His tee shot at the par-three pitched at the back of the green and slowly dribbled its way back towards the hole to ever increasing roars of approval.

Like everyone else in the field, Woods has no chance of making the 607-yard ninth in two. A ravine in front of the green means the players lay up in wedge range, and Woods was a fraction out with his approach, which spun off the front of the green. Chipping with his three-wood, Woods saved his par for an outward 31.

A 29 would have been within his range by holding his wedge short, as demonstrated by Jose Maria Olazabal. Having been in



On the way out: John Daly tees off on the third hole at the Congressional before withdrawing from the US Open after nine holes yesterday. Photograph: Jamie Squire/Allsport

trouble off the tee, Olazabal was actually playing his fourth and the birdie was his first deviation from par of the day. Paul Azinger doffed his cap and bowed in supplication, a gesture

the Spaniard returned with equal extravagance. The shot pitched four feet behind the hole and spun back in. In the following group, Nick Faldo pitched his third in the same

spot, did not get the same backspin and missed his birdie putt. It was typical of Faldo's last two days and while Olazabal was one over for the tournament through 15 holes, Faldo was battling to avoid missing the cut for the second successive major. A birdie at the ninth would have meant two in a row and got him back to level for the day, but a bogey at the short 12th left him four over and hoping Montgomerie would not go too far ahead. Faldo might need the 10-shot rule to stay in.

The walk from the ninth green to the 10th tee is a long one, and passes the clubhouse, a temptation that John Daly found too great to resist. Having gone to the turn in 38, he

was 10 over for his third tournament back after undergoing eight weeks of therapy for alcohol addiction at the Betty Ford Centre. He immediately left the course.

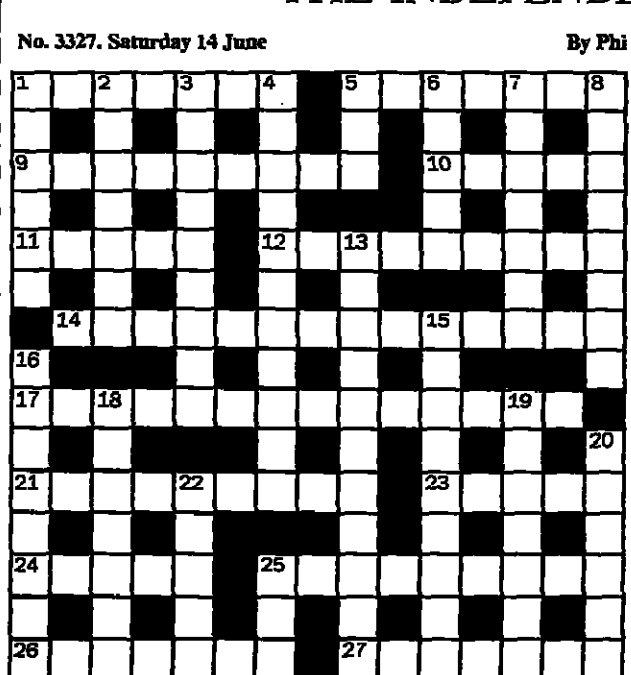
Daly, who was covered in sweat, gave no explanation for his withdrawal to the officials, which would not have been accepted had the event been run by the US PGA Tour rather than the USGA. The first his caddy and playing partners, Payne Stewart and Ernie Els, knew of his retirement came when Daly did not appear at the 10th.

US OPEN (Bethesda, Md): Second-round scores (18 holes started). * Denotes amateur. 341 M Gibson 72 69: S Dunlap 75 66: 344 R Pate 76 72: Lee Royer 73 75: 350 G Winkles 73 77: 351 M White 71 80: 353 B Grier 80 73: F Lobos 71 80: M O'Rourke 75 78: 359 B Trevino 74 80: Retired: J Daly.

Complete first-round scores from the Congressional

US unless stated denotes amateur	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	
C Montgomerie (GB)	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
H Sutton (GB)	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96
M McIlroy (GB)	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97
H Kishi (Japan)	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
J Stransky (Czech)	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99
M Brady (Czech)	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
O Ogrin (Slovenia)	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	
Ausi, L. Mize, D. White	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100		

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD



Friday's solution

LEGATION THREAT
ALWAYS
DRAMATIC AMOUNT
YOUNG
LYING EXISTENCE
VALUED
MAGIC MUSHROOM
EAT UP
SPAREPART
MALAYS
RESIDE

Last Saturday's solution

STARS UNDERWAY
EAGLE
INFLUENCES CLAM
SUNOT
MEMORIAL RASCAL
ETUI
LAGERATE
KESIT
CAPSICUM
PENGUIN NAMED
FLUE BRAZENNESS
EALRANCE
TRUMPETRY SWEATS

- ACROSS**
- Takes to court leader of Surrey after cricket club has interrupted good fortune (7)
 - Goddess' skill is confining those vulgar people (7)
 - South African creature is an innocent victim (9)
 - Some minor masterpiece - Bellini's? (5)
 - Fog seen around dead centre (5)
 - Church loves to get involved in drink education (9)
 - Being subject to big drinks possibly makes you a bad shot (6,8)
 - Gambling game not taking up all the deck? (5-4,5)
 - Health worker who could give camper aid (9)
 - Complaining sound - it's the drink, we hear (5)
 - Half-heartedly try to influence peer (5)
 - Cheese about to take clubman a little time (9)
 - Quavering river creature seen between sides of Tay (7)
 - Rope some covered in fat (7)
- DOWN**
- Half of seed found with identical source of seeds (6)
 - Abbasid, say, beginning to court praise with leaders of Italian orchestras (7)
 - Not half exciting item of furniture ready for office (9)
 - Union official to betray airline worker? (4,7)
 - Law, one supported by Court (3)
 - Brown's attempt to dance (5)
 - Damage rise of one composer (7)
 - Get feeling of nostalgia, say, climbing aboard sleigh covered in stars (8)
 - Important teacher, with unusual malice, penning "ten" in computer notation (11)
 - Female in boat who'd move to give a swan room (9)
 - How one could squash a bug quickly? (4-2,3)
 - Food not often munched (7)
 - Agree with artist's representation of fabulous beast (7)
 - Sea into which English officer ran (6)
 - Nonsense - this is where I have a ball! (2,3)
 - Diffident, though starts to call on you (3)
- The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hardbacked copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, 2, O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3SL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: J Sapsford, Waltham Abbey; N Dodson, Draycott; D Jones, London E5; J Headrie, London NW11; P Harris, Chester.

SPORT

LION TRAINER
Ian McGeechan, Lions coach, talks to Chris Hewett about the tactical battle that lies ahead in the rugby union Test series against South Africa.

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IMAGE OF THE WEEK An engineer plods out, protected against high spray and low rain, along Queen's pier at Ramsey on the Isle of Man. His job is to see how sound the construction of the old iron pier is and what, if anything, it can be used for. Photograph by Tom Pilston using a Nikon F4 with an 85mm lens, 1/125th second at f8, with Fuji 800 film

To order a print of this picture - it costs £15 - phone 0171-293 2534

the long weekend

THE INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 14 JUNE 1997

WORDS OF THE WEEK

In August of 1961, my agent got a call from Hitchcock's office saying he wanted me to write the screenplay for *The Birds* by Daphne du Maurier. I read it and I said, "Yes, I'd love to do it". I would have said yes if he said: "Would you like to write a screenplay on the Bronx telephone directory?" He called that same day and explained to me that he did not want to do a movie about two inarticulate Cornish farmers in a cottage being attacked by birds. These weren't his kind of people. He further said: "I don't want to film ever again in England." He said: "So what we're doing, basically, we're throwing away everything but the title and the concept of birds attacking people. So bring out some ideas."

So I went out with two. One was that a murder had been committed and we would somehow relate the murder to this woman arriving. We always knew instinctively that it was to be a woman. We later learnt that women are more frightened of birds than men are. One of the ideas I brought out was that a murder had been committed and for some reason she was there in this town. Hitch shot that down.

He said that'll detract from our major story which is birds attacking people. Then I suggested that perhaps we could do a story about a new schoolteacher who comes to the town. Somehow bird attacks start after she arrives and the townspeople suspiciously and superstitiously relate this to her. Hitch said: "No, I don't like that either."

So we went from there. The schoolteacher has survived somewhat and the superstition and suspicion has survived somewhat, but the story is a very different one.

We're now faced only with birds attacking people. And this is what we did every morning in his office first at Paramount, and then Universal: discuss how are we going to do this? Sheridan Morley: Was he aware of how he was going to get these bloody birds to swoop? Was it an animatronic area of discussion? Did you actually worry about how things would work?

Evan Hunter: He said: "Don't worry about it,

Evan Hunter, aka Ed McBain, wrote the screenplay for the film 'The Birds', starring Tippi Hedren, right. He discussed the movie - and Alfred Hitchcock - with Sheridan Morley, at the National Film Theatre



The girl should be Grace but she is in Monaco being a Princess

you write it. I'll get it on the screen." As it turned out later down the road, he did not get it on the screen. But you know, this was before *Star Wars* technology.

There are so many brilliant things in the film that Hitch did that are extraordinary, that were not in the screenplay. The stuff he added was absolutely brilliant. The scene in the phone booth, where she's trapped, trying to get out, that's absolute inventiveness that came from the director on the set at the moment. The scene in the house where the birds are attacking - and we really see a bird - in all the other scenes, we see masses of birds hitting people. In the house we just hear the birds and we see one or two birds pecking at his hand when he's trying to close the window. It's a terrifying scene. Just the sound and the beaks pecking at the door: a frightening scene and true Hitchcock in the truest sense.

SM: I remember, with deep embarrassment, writing a review of it. In those days we all believed that films weren't about what they appear to be about and so we all said, "OK, it clearly isn't about birds". I remember, with deep embarrassment, deciding it was about McCarthyism. Because in those days everybody thought all films were about McCarthyism - ever since *High Noon*. After a while, I went to the film again and realised it actually was about birds.

EH: Well, not in my head. And not during the discussions when we were discussing the screenplay and working on it. Hitch used to come in every morning - let me explain the working procedure. He would come in every morning and he would sit down in a big wing-back chair and his feet scarcely touching the floor and he was always dressed in a very dark blue suit and a tie and a white shirt and black shoes and black socks. And he would sit there

and he would say: "Tell me the story so far." And in the beginning that was easy. But as it went on and I had to tell him the story from the beginning, it got to be a rather lengthy exercise and he would pick holes in the story so far, and say: "Why does she do this? Why does she do that?" There was never any doubt in our minds that a woman would be the lead. And as a matter of fact, there was never any doubt in my mind that I was writing for Grace Kelly and Cary Grant, and Hitch would have preferred that, too, but we got Tippi Hedren and Rod Taylor.

Why? Well, as Hitch put it, when we were talking about what he called "the girl", he said: "Well, the girl should be Grace, of course, but she's in Monaco being a princess, isn't she?" And then he said: "And for the man, Cary, of course, whoever or whatever he may turn out to be, Cary," he said. "But why should I give Cary 50 per cent of the picture?" He said: "There are only two stars in this picture - the Birds and me." And then he hesitated a moment and he said: "And, of course, you."

I first met Tippi at the studio. I'll do it from my point of view: I'm the camera - you came in here, and on this side were his executive offices with his secretaries and all that, and on this side were his private offices where we used to work each morning. One day I came in and his assistant said: "Hitch is in with someone." So I was waiting and the door opened to Hitch's office and he came out and walked down the hall and - I'm still the camera - down there stands Tippi Hedren in her favourite one of two poses from the movie. Hitch said: "That's Melanie," I looked and I said: "Who is she?" He said: "Tippi Hedren." I looked again, and I said: "What is she?" He explained that she had done hair commercials on television. I said: "Do you think she has the range to play the comic scenes that we need at the beginning and then the terror at the end?" He said: "Trust me, Evan." And I thought: "Oy! Go hide the silver."

Evan Hunter was taking part in the *Murder Ink* series of talks and films at London's National Film Theatre.

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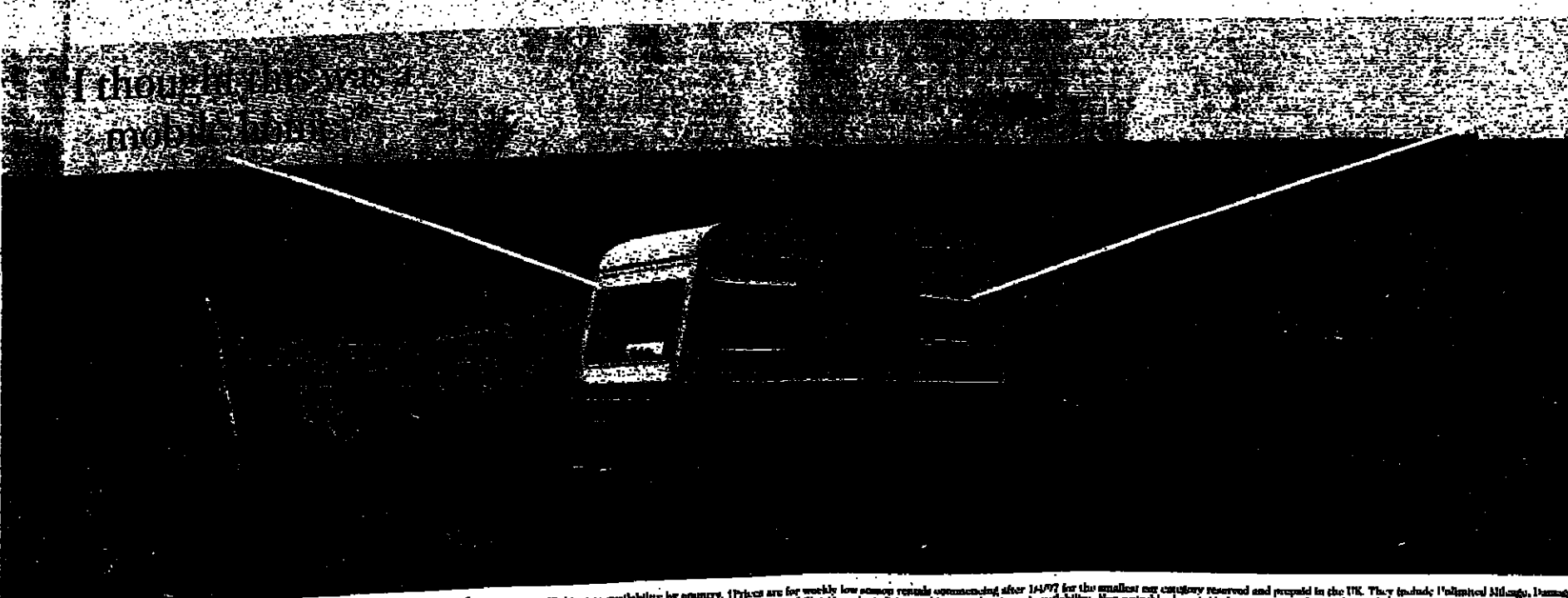


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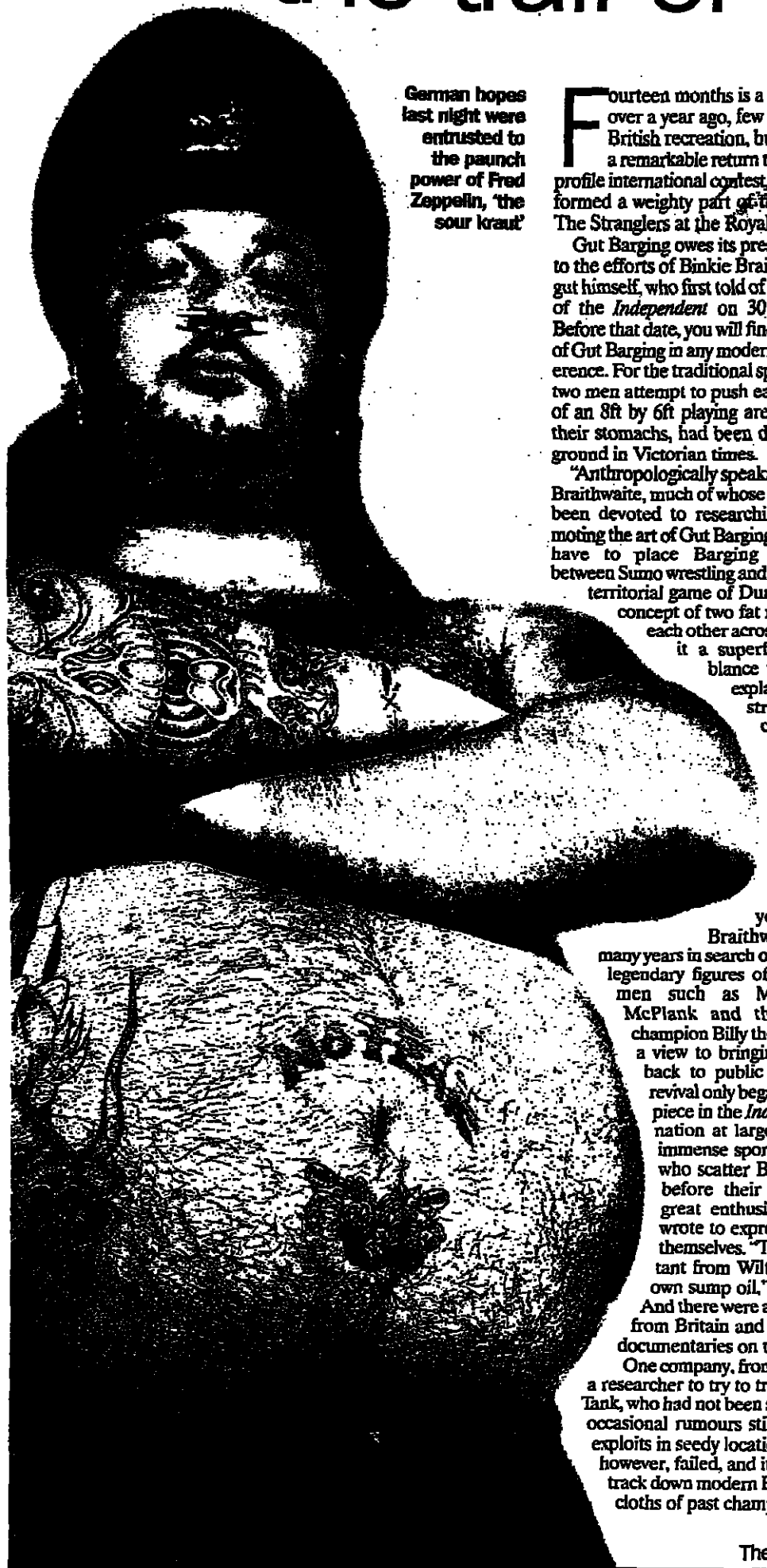
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On the trail of the abdominal showmen



German hopes last night were entrusted to the paunch power of Fred Zeppelin, 'the sour kraut'

Fourteen months is a long time in Gut Barging. Just over a year ago, few of us had heard of this ancient British recreation, but yesterday night it completed a remarkable return to prominence with its first high-profile international contest, 'The Brawl in the Hall', which formed a weighty part of the 21st anniversary concert of The Stranglers at the Royal Albert Hall.

Gut Barging owes its present popularity almost entirely to the efforts of Binkie Braithwaite, 46, a man of no mean gut himself, who first told of the joys of Barging in the pages of the *Independent* on 30 April 1996. Before that date, you will find no mention of Gut Barging in any modern work of reference. For the traditional sport, in which two men attempt to push each other out of an 8ft by 6ft playing area using only their stomachs, had been driven underground in Victorian times.

"Anthropologically speaking," says Mr Braithwaite, much of whose adult life has been devoted to researching and promoting the art of Gut Barging, "one would have to place Barging somewhere between Sumo wrestling and the Peruvian territorial game of Dungwaik." The concept of two fat men pushing each other across a mat gives it a superficial resemblance to Sumo, he explains, but its strategy owes more to the Peruvian game.

Having himself participated in Gut Barging in his youth, Mr Braithwaite spent many years in search of some of the legendary figures of the sport, men such as Mick 'JCB' McPank and the northern champion Billy the Tank - with a view to bringing the game back to public notice. The revival only began in earnest, however, after his piece in the *Independent* appeared. When the nation at large heard of these abnormally immense sportsmen, lathered in engine oil, who scatter Bombay Mix across the canvas before their bouts, they responded with great enthusiasm. More than 100 people wrote to express an interest in participating themselves. "There was even a skinny accountant from Wiltshire who turned up with his own sump oil," Mr Braithwaite remembers. And there were also eight television companies, from Britain and abroad, who wanted to make documentaries on the sport.

One company, from the north-east, even assigned a researcher to try to track down the elusive Billy the Tank, who had not been seen for some 20 years, though occasional rumours still surface of his Gut Barging exploits in seedy locations in Harrogate. The search, however, failed, and it was left to Mr Braithwaite to track down modern Bargers worthy to don the loin-cloths of past champions.



From the pages of 'The Independent' to the stage of the Albert Hall, Binkie Braithwaite - 'the Gutfather' - explains the finer points of Barging to William Hartston

First among them was the man with the reputation of being the equal of Billy the Tank or any other barger still alive. "Mad Maurice, the Belgian from Melksham," Mad Maurice's mastery of the "Full Johnny Turk" - an explosive barge that removes the opponent from the mat - had made him the most feared man in the game and its unofficial world champion.

When Mad Maurice defeated the Devon champion "Chernobyl" in the first official bout of the modern era last year, his status was confirmed. Indeed his reputation was even enhanced by the manner in which he won the deciding bout with the extremely rare "Norwegian" - a distraction move involving a shout of "Your shoelaces are undone".

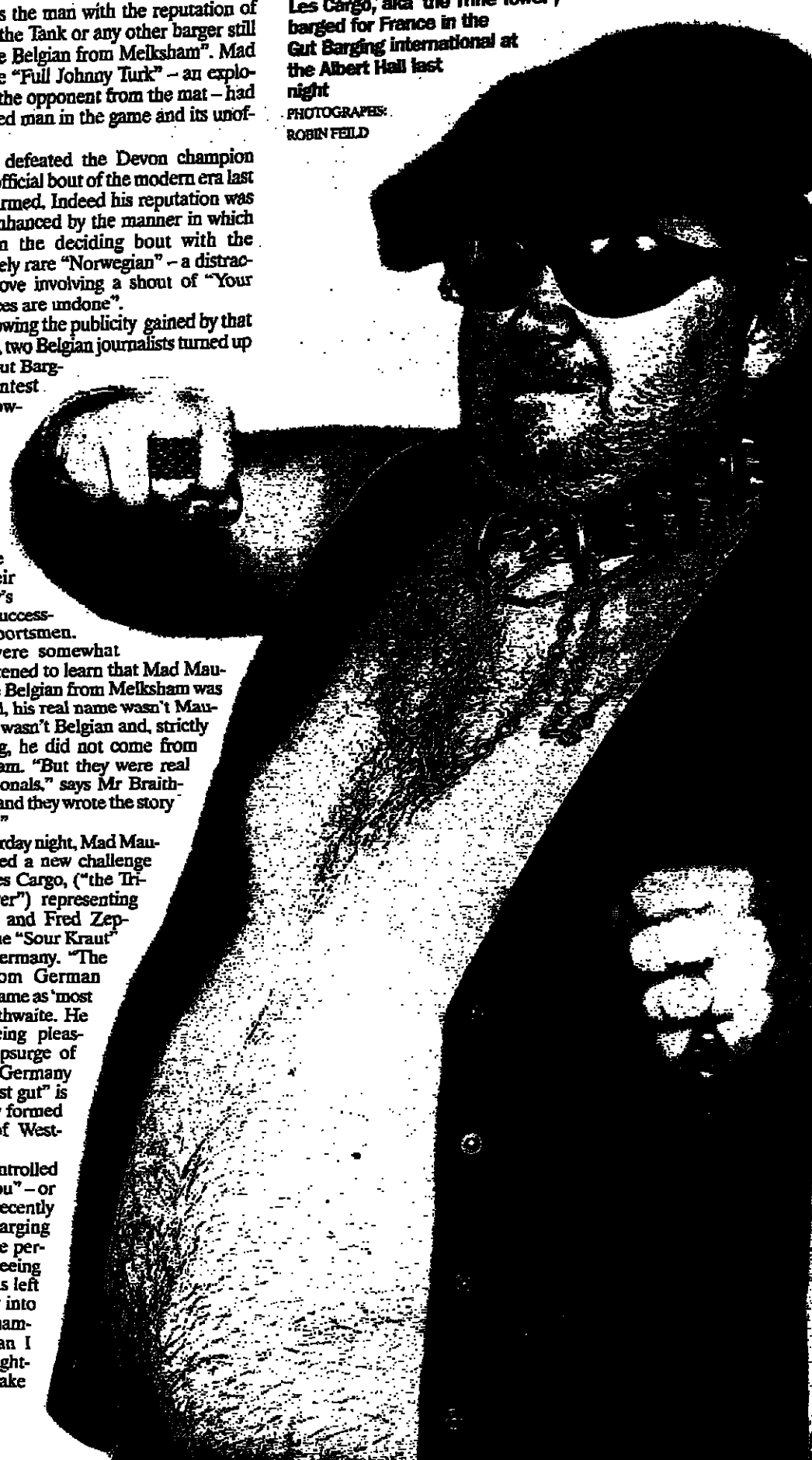
Following the publicity gained by that contest, two Belgian journalists turned up for a Gut Barging contest in Trowbridge this year hoping to write a piece on one of their country's most successful sportsmen. They were somewhat disheartened to learn that Mad Maurice, the Belgian from Melksham was not mad, his real name wasn't Maurice, he wasn't Belgian and, strictly speaking, he did not come from Melksham. "But they were real professionals," says Mr Braithwaite, "and they wrote the story anyway."

Yesterday night, Mad Maurice faced a new challenge from Les Cargo, ("the Trifle Tower") representing France, and Fred Zeppelin, the "Sour Kraut" from Germany. "The lady from German

television described this name as 'most amusing'," said Mr Braithwaite. He admitted, however, to being pleasantly surprised at the upsurge of interest in Barging in Germany where, he tells us, "Gut ist gut" is the motto of the recently formed Wanstrempelverband of Westphalia.

The contests will be controlled by Guevara Cliff, the "balou" - or official referee - of the recently formed World Gut-Barging Association, a man whose personal experience of refereeing Mad Maurice's bouts has left him with a unique insight into what makes him such a champion: "He's the only man I know," says Mr Cliff thoughtfully, "with the ability to make his belly-burton sneer."

Les Cargo, aka 'the Trifle Tower', barged for France in the Gut Barging international at the Albert Hall last night. PHOTOGRAPHS: ROBIN FELD



John Walsh meets Leslie Caron

Games people play

Pandora Melly learns the arts of mountaineering in bed and being very dull in Willesden

Will Self, 35, writer

I find the spectacle of a lot of people playing games one of the most revolting things in the world. Competitive games with men are all too often a pathetic example of the dominance displays of apes. It really is an unedifying spectacle; a lot of silly

men beating their tits. This is my loss, probably, because I also feel that there is a kind of game-playing that is a lot more co-operative and enjoyable.

The only game I really enjoyed playing was something called "Willy's Walk to Grandma". It was an allegorical journey on oil-cloth; very Bunyan-esque. It was

my grandmother's when she was a child. Instead of a dice, there was a tee-toe-tum. I think the tokens were made of ivory.

My brother and I once invented a game: it was called Gray's Thurrock. You begin by naming a boring suburb in London, then your opponent has to name a more boring suburb.

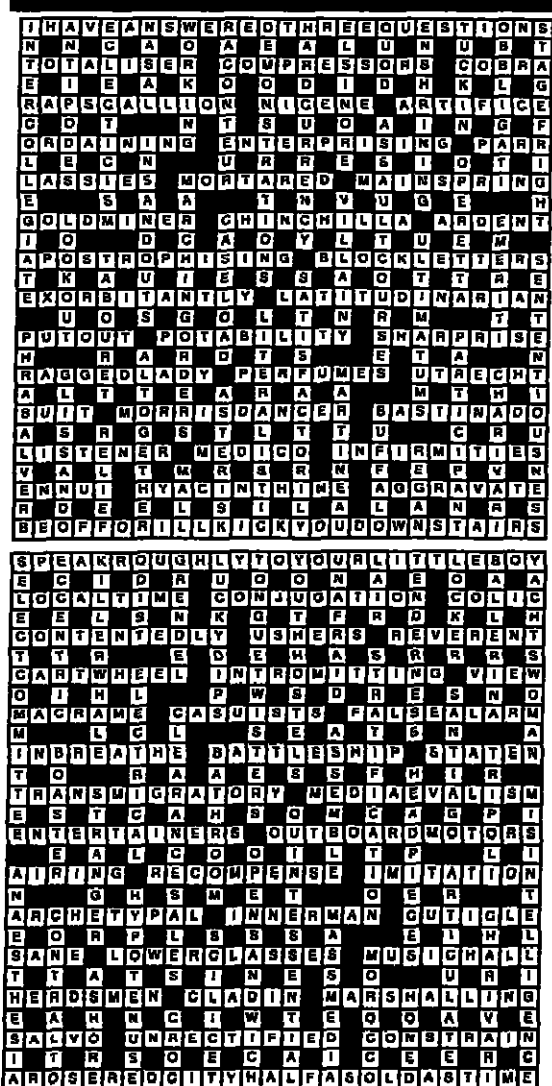
If you start with Willesden, you're in trouble. Unlike Mornington Crescent, which is a stupid non-game, it requires an encyclopedic knowledge of London suburbs. You really have to know your *shilli* before you get into a game of Gray's Thurrock.

We used to play route games

as well. You're sitting in one part of town, and somebody says: "How'd you get to X?" You've got to name every street, and players can challenge by saying: "You've missed a one-way system back there", or "You forgot the short-cut", or whatever. Very boring if you're not interested in routes.

I completely fail to play games, or have any pastimes, or really do anything much. I'm an armchair mountaineer. There's nothing I like better than reading about somebody hanging off the south face of Annapurna, when I'm cuddled up in bed. Are games a rehearsal for something? More games, possibly.

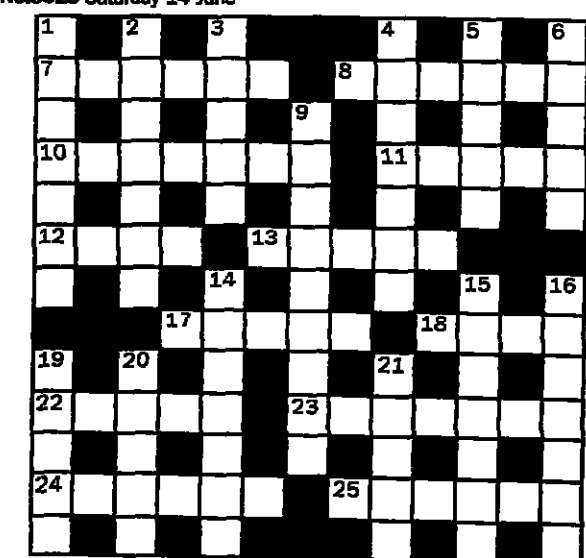
Jumbo crossword answers



The overall winner was Mrs J. Rogers of Worcester who wins Oxford Dictionary of Music, Art and Opera. The cryptic winners were PA. Bacon, Essex; Phil Boddy, Essex; Mrs S.K. Peters, Chesham; V. Townsend, Hants; Rev. Paul Williams, Essex; and Armored Young, Nottingham. The concise winners were Heather Brown, Cambridge; Mo Joque Garden, Manchester; K.A. Griffin, Winchester; Reginald Kelly, Coventry; E.B. Perch, Northumberland; and Mr W.G.H. Ticker, Essex. All twelve receive Oxford University Press's forthcoming Food and Fitness A Dictionary of Diet and Exercise.

Concise crossword

No.3325 Saturday 14 June



- ACROSS**
- 7 Second-mentioned of two (6)
 - 8 Masticated (6)
 - 10 Charting (7)
 - 11 Wash out (5)
 - 12 Bone (4)
 - 13 Squander (5)
 - 17 Void (5)
 - 18 Money owed (4)
 - 22 Lively dance (5)
 - 23 Feed (7)
 - 24 Be of help to (6)
 - 25 Cricket team (6)

- DOWN**
- 1 Former pupil (7)
 - 2 Clergyman's income (7)
 - 3 Great danger (5)
 - 4 Good cause (7)
 - 5 Pigs (5)
 - 6 Loafer (5)
 - 9 Flower (9)
 - 14 Legation (7)
 - 15 Credit (7)
 - 16 Engraving (7)
 - 19 Throwing weapon (5)
 - 20 Explosion (5)
 - 21 Brass instrument used in army etc (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Status, 4 Trian (Swiss), 7 Modernise, 9 Peel, 10 Trot, 11 Steer, 13 Dearth, 14 Rudder, 15 Exhort, 17 Smelly, 19 Tasty, 20 Dank, 22 Song, 23 Entertain, 24 Govern, 25 Exent. DOWN: 1 Stupid, 2 Tool, 3 Slurth, 4 Tanker, 5 Test, 6 Neater, 7 Megaphone, 8 Eruption, 11 Start, 12 Rummy, 15 Ending, 16 Tavern, 17 Statue, 18 Yogurt, 21 Kane, 22 Sill.

Bridge Alan Hiron

East-West game; dealer East

North	
♠ 8 5	
♥ 10 9 8 6 4	
♦ K J 10 8	
♣ 10 8	
West	
♠ 6 2	
♥ K 3 2	
♦ Q 6 5 2	
♣ A 9 4 3	
East	
♠ K 4	
♥ A Q J 7 5	
♦ A 3	
♣ K J 5 2	
South	
♠ A Q J 10 9 7 3	
♥ none	
♦ 9 7 4	
♣ Q 7 6	

"What an infuriating hand!" explained East at the end of this deal. "We had 27 points between us; we couldn't make a game and we couldn't defeat Four Spades." He was wrong on two counts: a distinctly anti-percentage play in clubs would have allowed him to make ~Three No-trumps and, more practically, his side should certainly have defeated Four Spades.

East opened 1♥ and South

Perplexity

Mixed doubles:

Tresses harden mortal whine graft pit.

The above sentence hides three connected answers. To find them, you must group the six words into three pairs, then rearrange the letters within each pair.

A prize of the *Chambers 21st Dictionary* will be awarded to the sender of the first correct answer we open on 26 June. Answers to:

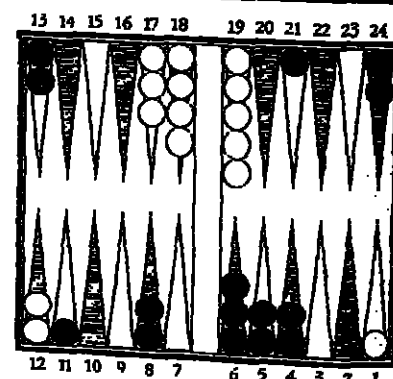
Perplexity, *The Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

31 May answers:

10 12 16	All lines
13 4 2 19	parallel to
15 8 5 7 3	any side
14 6 1 17	add up to
9 11 18	38. This

and reflections. Winner: D.J. Shoosmith (Cheltenham).

Backgammon Chris Bray



Here's a position which confounded George Sultimiski, doyen of the London backgammon scene. The cube is in the centre and Black has a choice of two plays with 4.1: an attacking game plan with 11/7, 8/7, trying to contain White's last man; or a defensive position with 24/20, 21/20, making his opponent's 5-point. This is a difficult decision between two very different plans. The thinking might be like this:

For the attacking plan: my best idea is to restrain White's last man by making a prime. I can make a good improvement to my prime by making my bar-point with this 4.1 and then if I roll a 5 next turn I can make it a five point prime. I'm not too worried by White's potential for attack as all his men are in stacks and not very threatening.

For the defensive plan: it's never wrong to make your opponent's 5-point. This will stop him using those stacked men to improve his position if he rolls small numbers or a double. Meanwhile, even if White runs out with his last man I will still have a double shot at him; in any case, there will be chances to make my bar-point later.

Most players opt for attack rather than defence. In this instance, however, the defensive play is correct because having set up a good defence the attacking possibilities on the other side of the board remain. The converse is not true as the game showed: after long thought, George opted for the attacking play. White rolled 4.4 playing 8/4(2)*, 6/2(2). George failed to enter. White rolled 4.2 playing 24/22, 8/4 and George stayed on the bar again. At this point White doubled and George dropped, thus never getting the chance to complete his attacking prime. The double is clear as is the drop - or is it? We'll see next week.

For the weather, traffic reports, the sky at night, and Damien Hurts the cartoon sage of artistic angst ... TURN TO PAGE 31

هكذا من الأصل

The mouse that soared



John Walsh
meets
Leslie Caron

Leslie Caron makes a startling appearance in the pages of a newly published book of film-star legends caught off-screen, off-duty and mostly off their faces. *Jean Howard's Hollywood* is a striking collection of informal snaps of the Tinseltown Court with its hair down, at parties, soirées, golf matches, and green-room snack breaks, all the celluloid Olympians at play. You get a camp Bogart, a sloshed and busty Garland, a suspicious-looking Brando, a nervy Cole Porter, a throng of third-division producers with bank manager moustaches... And in the midst of this grey, Fifties bacchanal, you encounter Ms Caron. She jumps off the page at you: 21 that spring, with two years of stardom already behind her, she looks at the enquiring camera with toothy directness, her face like a cheerful teenager's, innocent if not necessarily virginal. She seems miles removed from the ruckus of sofa seductions and moody posing. What on earth she is doing amid the Beverly Hills throng is a mystery. And when you meet her today, you still can't imagine her as part of it: there's no discernible bridge between that time and the rest of her uniquely *mouvementé* life.

"I didn't enjoy or use Hollywood," she said, "and maybe that's what saved me. Maybe this is why I'm still running. I didn't get stuck in it. The weird thing was, I could never remember the names of executives or which studio I was working for. There was a sort of block there - perhaps to save myself, I don't know. The scope of it, the artificiality of it was something I shied away from." She was, she says, mortifyingly shy. The studio gamine, star of the Gershwin musical *An American in Paris* (five Oscars) and *Lili* (she got an Oscar nomination) and *Gigi* (10 Oscars), she played up her ingénue persona as a defence against the tidal wave of fussy charm that raged about her. She found David Niven sly, mischief-making and violent (he once slapped her when drunk). "There was somebody very nasty in him, deep down." She met Cary Grant and Peter Lawford and Frank Sinatra and the rest of the naughty-boy "Rat Pack" but, *mille diu*, "if anyone romanced me, I never noticed. You have no idea how shy I was. A real little mouse. I think that's why I played little girls for so long, because I couldn't face being a Hollywood star with all that glitter and self-assurance..." It wasn't a pose. Only someone genuinely appalled by the trappings of glamour could have turned down the director George Cukor when he begged her to make up a lunch quartet with, get this, Greta Garbo, Mae West and Barbara Streisand. "An absolutely historical luncheon, I know, but I would have felt very uncomfortable in front of these great dames. You know what happened at that lunch? Streisand said, 'Gee, Miss West, I do so admire your work,' and Mae West replied, 'Sure



Leslie Caron, happy in a curious hinterland of anonymity and celebrity, and at 21, below (from Jean Howard's 'Hollywood - a Photo Memoir')

PHOTO: ANDREW BURMAN

honey, I can tell by the way you bin stealin' it..."

She laughs, an unexpectedly gleeful noise. Forty-five years after the Hollywood snap - she's 66 on 1 July - she is damnably good-looking. Her (unface-lifted) skin shows a few veins and her large blue eyes with their tiny pupils carry a freight of melancholy, but you'd kill to be seen with her on your arm at Le Caprice. Her auburn hair is cut in a becomingly floppy Juliette Binoche style. She wears an expensively simple canary-yellow cotton jacket with a tiny Aids ribbon and a rocklessly décolleté white blouse. Like her clothes, her conversation is without pretension: she has, it seems, never lost a wide-eyed, romantic quality that surfaces when she talks about politics or buildings, or role models.

Her heroines are many and mostly French. Like George Sand (the *nom de plume* of Aurore Dupin), the French novelist and serial literary *horizontale* whom she is currently impersonating at the Chichester Theatre in a two-hander entertainment called *Nocturne for Lovers*. Each evening, the audience is treated to 14 transmissions of Chopin by the pianist David Abramovitz, and 14 pages of Sand's voluminous passionate correspondence, memorised and dramatised by La Caron.

"I haven't read George Sand's novels, but I've read her letters and there are 20,000 of them," said Caron. "They're so amusing and witty and profound and eventually dramatic: there was real drama in her life, when her daughter came between her and Chopin and broke up the relationship. There's a spontaneity about the letters which is completely undated." Caron is also a fan of Sand's political stance, her self-proclaimed Communism, her interest in workers' rights, her proto-feminism. "She once wrote, 'I cannot recommend marriage to women so long as the law of the land condemns a wife to be a dependant, an eternal minor,'" said Caron with evident satisfaction. "I adore her. Every day I discover new things about her. I found out she was descended from two kings of Poland. She had very noble blood, but always on the illegitimate side."

Listening to Caron rapturously discussing Sand's love life ("Her husband was nice enough but a boor, a country

boor, and she decided there was no intellectual rapport between them..."), her fondness for painting, her adoration of her children, her famous lovers (Prosper Mérimée and Delacroix, as well as Chopin), her regimen of hard work at the end of the day, it's obvious that a considerable force-field of empathy is reverberating between the two women, a century apart. Sand married at 22, had a child at 19, then left her husband at 22 and went to Paris to meet her lover, Jules Sandeau. She wrote, painted, pontificated and was part of the revolution of 1848. In 1948, Caron was a Parisian star at 17, in the fantastically *branché* Ballet des Champs Elysées run by Roland Petit and his wife Zizi Jeanmaire. Gene Kelly spotted her on stage and brought her to Hollywood, aged 18. Her first husband was the heir

"You have no idea how shy I was. I think that's why I played little girls for so long, I couldn't face being a Hollywood star with all that self-assurance"

to the Spam fortune, George Hormel, but her interest in processed meat waned after six months. She later married Peter Hall when they met on the stage set of *Gigi* in 1955, after Caron sought him out to direct Alan Jay Lerner's musical of a cocotte's progress. She left Hall and their two children to be with Warren Beatty in Los Angeles. Beatty encouraged her to write; later she took up painting...

OK, then, where did she feel the strongest affinity with the novelist? "In her total sense of independence," said Caron firmly. "I've got out of several marriages for the same reason. I cannot stand to be subservient to a man. On one hand, you're taught to look up to the man and be very domesticated, which I can be, just as George could - she was very good at

sewing and making jam. On the other, I can't stand men who give orders, who say, 'Right at 8 o'clock I want you in that dress, meet me there, I'll decide where we're going, we'll take the blue car...' Basically I just don't like rich men, who have the habit of giving orders."

Caron's voracious reading of Sand revealed a woman who was more entranced by the idea of sexual passion than the reality. "I noticed in the correspondence that the great loves of her life were filial or maternal. Her relationship with Chopin was very maternal. She quickly discovered that he just didn't have the strength, the stamina, to handle her. She writes somewhere about how Chopin is complaining because she insists on sexual abstinence between them. But, she says, if I acted any differently, I'd kill



him..." Crabwise, the subject of mother and death have entered the conversation - a poignant pairing, given what happened to Caron's mother. She was an American divorcee and actress, rather looked down on by the family of Leslie's father, a French chemist from a long line of well-to-do lawyers. "My mother spent a little time in Texas when she was a child and could have played a southern belle. Physically, she was like a Botticelli, blonde and willowy and fine and vulnerable."

Leslie and her family were in Paris during the war, "from nine to 14. I remember the Occupation very well, but mostly I remember being cold and hungry and sick." Her parents' happy marriage suffered. "She couldn't stand the war, it depressed her and the way the family's for-

tunes went right down, it debilitated her immensely. After it was over she moved the family - my father and brother - to the Virgin Islands to set up a business, but very soon after she killed herself."

Suicide apart, she is clearly the strongest influence on Caron's life. She was a dancer, so Leslie became one. She had been an actress and decided her daughter should be one too. "She never told me I was pretty, but she was sure I should be an actress. She gave me lots of advice. 'Now listen to me,' she said once. 'Don't let them put you in a sarong. Remember what happened to poor Dorothy Lamour. And don't ever marry Mickey Rooney.' What had Leslie inherited from her? "She could do a bit of everything. She could paint, and write, she could dance and act if she'd tried harder, but at the time women weren't encouraged to work. She didn't have the strength of George Sand to break away. She instilled a contradiction in me. She always said, 'Sweetheart, rich boys are just as nice as poor ones,' but she'd also say, 'You can't depend on men to earn your living.'"

The omniscient mother surfaces in the daughter when it comes to building. Ms Caron has been obsessed for the last couple of years with La Lucarne aux Chouettes, a restaurant in Burgundy which, with her son Christopher, she bought as a ruin and renovated with her bare hands. "I'm a worker," she says, pushing a brochure across the table at me. "I like to put my hands into things. And I have an instinct about old houses. I see one that's about to be torn down and I can tell exactly what it could be turned into. I get very passionate about it." Her passion for The Owl House involved her in farcical negotiations with grasping building contractors ("When the first estimates came in, they were so enormous, I said, 'Look boys, I may come from Hollywood, but we just don't have that kind of money,' and eventually I hired English workers instead) and enraged locals. "They're a very close society, the Burgundians," she said with infinite condescension. "Some of them have never been to Paris, though it's only 75 miles away. They said, 'Who does she think she is, this woman?' But they were very sur-

prised when it opened and now they're really proud of it. It's opened up the town. Before it, the town was known only for having two nursing homes for retired people. Its function was as a place people came to die. Now the locals eat here because it's cheap, and I get the fancy crowd from America, from Germany and England. I've had private planes come in and land." Indeed, the village of Villeneuve-sur-Yonne has never seen anything like it. Nor do they necessarily know who their benefactress-cum-patronne is, since she has never been a French film star. But she likes this curious hinterland of anonymity and celebrity.

It is not, however, a profitable initiative. The auberge barely makes enough profit to require Ms Caron to pay income tax. And the subject of workers inspires her to a lengthy riff on the inequities of French socialism and its draconian employment laws. Even the new women of Mr Jospin's government fail to impress her, "because they're all so narrow in their view of socialism. It doesn't go beyond punishing the employers. They haven't come to the simple conclusion that, in order to pay an employee, you must have an employer. At least in a free market like England, if you do well, if you prove yourself to be a good employee, you can climb, eventually you can open your own business. In France you'd have to be a total cretin to start a business. Around Villeneuve, there's about 40 or 50 craftsmen of the first quality, builders, roofmakers, restorers. They would employ people if they could afford it, but they don't. Everyone works with his wife,

his brother, his son. There isn't a single craftsman with an apprentice. That's French employment for you..." She can't even depend on the Hollywood jetset, who come to boost her profits, but only after May and June.

Self-protectively cautious about the Hollywood star system when young, she is disarmingly modest about the interest value of her life. No she does not plan an autobiography. "I just don't think I've done enough to justify it. I hate the kind of biography which says, 'I met so-and-so, and the critics said this and the public thought that, and I received this nomination and that award. It could so easily become... [she made an unladylike noise, like 'Urrrrgh!']... so trashy.' Oh come off it, I said. Among other things it would be a bestseller in France: young Parisians lives through the Occupation, dances with Petit, meets Gene Kelly, stars in Hollywood musical, world at her feet, meets film gods, decamps for London, lionised therein, meets theatre gods, three marriages, stormy affairs, children, Hollywood again, more movies, paintings, books, depression, recovery and finally, after amusing Peter Mayle-style tussle with locals, opens fashionable eatery in the land of her fathers..." Surely? She shakes her head. She says nobody knows who she is in France. It is only when I comment on her tiny Aids badge that she even mentions something she is obviously very proud of.

"Well, I'm happy if it's taken for an Aids badge, but in fact it's the Legion d'Honneur." When did she get it? "Four years ago, from President Mitterrand. There were nine of us - War Office people, UN people, a rabbi, a singer, a war heroine. There I was in the middle of them. Mitterrand spoke about each person for 10 minutes, without a single note, about their lives and careers and works. He even mentioned my book, though he said it had rather an unpleasant title - *Vengeance*. He thanked me for having represented France to the world for years..." She looked down modestly at the table, clearly tickled pink by this recognition from the top, then looked up at me. "Personally, I think I deserve it just for my staying power with *this*" - and she banged a girlish fist down on the inoffensive brochure of her sunlit, maddening auberge.

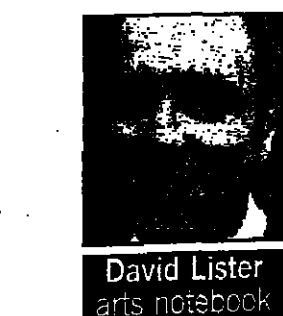
The Blairites have evidently not yet penetrated the music industry to judge by a deeply politically incorrect album that has come my way. *Industry*, by folk veterans Richard Thompson (ex Fairport Convention) and Danny Thompson, no relation (ex Pentangle), is not destined to form the background music for any New Labour rally. Subversive songs like "Sweetheart on the Barricade", which glorifies in women on the picket line, "Last Shift" about the closure of the Grimethorpe Colliery and "Lottery Land", which tells how a National Lottery-funded museum of industry replaced a steelworks, are sung with great emotion to rousing and eclectic musical backings. The CD booklet even eschews the usual fanzine stuff for an essay on "the descent of the industrial landscape and lifestyle into theme park Britain".

Are we witnessing a revival of the political protest song as a potent

Folk music turns industrial hardcore

weapon of opposition once again? Will teenagers shock their parents by telling them they're just going down the folk club? It's a good 30 years since the political protest song had its heyday. The irony is it seems to be the same folkies doing the protesting now as then: bald, bearded and grizzled but defiantly unmodernised.

The Arts Council is about to embark on choosing a new secretary general to replace Mary Allen, who has been sent speedily on her way to the Royal Opera House. Among the names being considered are insider Graham Devlin, who has been Mrs Allen's deputy; Paul Collard, former director of Visual Arts UK; Ruth MacKenzie, the head of Scottish Opera; and, if he can afford the pay

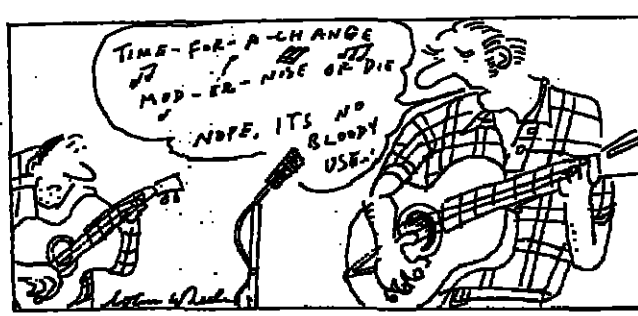


David Lister
arts notebook

cut, Adrian Ellis, the former Treasury whizz kid who runs a management consultancy specialising in advising on lottery projects. But I gather that another name is rapidly emerging as favourite, that of the flamboyant and ubiquitous Colin Tweedy. As the man who has successfully run the Association

for Business Sponsorship of the Arts for 14 years, 43-year-old Tweedy has not only mingled with government ministers, he has also mingled with the Princess of Wales and the Duchess of York when they were going through arts patronage phases. And he is, and doubtless always was, a card-carrying Labour

Party member, and has become part of the inner circle advising Labour's arts team. He also came out as gay in the *Independent* in a feature on the most influential gay people in Britain. Friend of the royals, gay role model, arts and business supremo and Labour activist, Arts Council meetings, should he be



appointed to the job, could take on a brighter hue.

One of the things the new man or woman at the Arts Council should look at is the amount of time it takes to make an appointment in the arts. It has now emerged that Heritage Secretary Chris Smith was convinced by the Royal Opera House chairman Lord Chadlington that he should allow him to appoint Mary Allen as general director at the ROH without the post being advertised on the grounds that the institution could not afford to spend 18 months looking for someone when the opera and ballet companies were just about to move out of Covent Garden. 18 months! Down in non-operative circles it usually takes a fortnight to advertise, a month to sift through the

applications and another month to interview and appoint. Why did Mr Smith not question such mind-boggling tardiness?

When humorist Ken Campbell's *Theatre Stories* opens at the National Theatre in October, Trevor Nunn will have just taken over formally as artistic director. The new boss had better have a thick skin. One of Campbell's stories tells of how he sent out hoax letters to theatre worthies around the world asking them to join The Dickens Company, a new project being set up by Trevor Nunn; and how Nunn called in the Special Branch when the responses started pouring in. "Yes, I do remember suddenly being bombarded with letters," recalled Nunn earlier this week. "As for the Special Branch, well, I don't want to spoil things, anyway I suspect by the time it's opening night, it will be the mafia I called in." Ah, the integrity of theatre.

arts & books

Bards behaving badly (to their women) 6
Meet the godmothers 6
Dracula, and other fantastic tales 7
Choice: Short stories 8

Mark Wigglesworth is a publicist's dream. And then they wake up. He is young but looks younger; 32 going on 19 (always a good start – youth is so alluring in a profession long dominated by the venerable). He is small but perfectly formed; he has a cheeky smile (no charm like boyish charm...); he has presence. But absolutely no interest in image. No matter, let's look at the career. It's already a big one. High-powered agent, the world's finest orchestras on his calling card. The trouble is he'd much rather talk about the BBC National Orchestra of Wales than the Berlin Philharmonic. So what about his beginnings? Now there's a dramatic story. He won the coveted Kyril Kondrashin conducting competition in 1989, just three weeks after leaving the Royal Academy of Music. Overnight recognition. The trouble is he insists upon talking about the miserable couple of years which followed: how he simply wasn't ready, how he learnt the hard way. He finds it salutary. So cancel the publicist. No, wait, there's a new six-part TV series coming from the BBC. *Everything to Play for Mark Wigglesworth Conducts...* yet another of those compulsive fly-on-the-wall documentaries: dynamic young maestro at work, in rehearsal, in performance, wandering the snowbound streets of St. Petersburg in search of the truth about Shostakovich's "Leningrad" Symphony...

Now that he does want to talk about. But the symphony, not the TV series. Because the symphony consumes him and the TV series... does not. "What can I say? It's about me, and that makes me very uncomfortable. You see, I don't think people should be interested in me. I want them to be interested in how I feel a musical phrase should go, in the rightness or otherwise of a tempo and what that means for the performance... The more people know about you as a person, as a personality, the more you will come between them and the music. I believe you are much freer as a musician if the public doesn't have a perception of you that is coloured by what they've currently been reading about you..."

Which is inevitable, of course. It's happening right now... "Which is why I'm wary of the whole business of promotion and image-making. And why – forgive me – I find interviews difficult. I don't even read reviews..." (old-fashioned look from the interviewer) "...No, really, I don't. Not because I don't have an interest in what the critics have to say, but because knowing that the public have a perception of me that may be coloured by those reviews – whether they're good or bad – inhibits me."

So let's look at Mark Wigglesworth, the conductor. Could it be that he is equally self-effacing? The technique certainly doesn't draw attention to itself. It's clear, it's emphatic, no quirks, no tricks, no platform acrobatics. Understated. Wigglesworth is plainly mindful of those maestros whose physicality is entirely self-serving. Meaning that it does not translate into sound. Meaning that it is directed at the audience. Wigglesworth insists that he is unconscious of the audience. He seems genuinely taken aback when I suggest that an audience hears in relation to what it sees, that seeing what a conductor does can intensify, pull focus on, what it hears. So a visual cue to the

He's got the looks. He's got the youth. He's got the talent. The only thing Mark Wigglesworth lacks is the instinct for self-promotion. Edward Seckerson meets one conductor who won't let his publicity stand between him and the music

The reluctant maestro



clarinets in relation to the strings might just alert an audience (if only subliminally) to a harmony or a colour; or direct their ears to the primary voices and help clarify the aural information visually. You see what you hear. And vice versa.

Wigglesworth is sceptical. Watch him in action. The beat is unflagging, the gestures sparing. The cues are few. A good professional orchestra doesn't need them, he says. Players should be relating to each other, not to the conductor. "My purpose is to encourage an orchestra to listen – to themselves, to each other. Their ears are so much more important than their eyes in that respect." But when they can't hear? "That's what the rehearsals are for. In rehearsals you discover where you are needed. You get it sorted. I never like to show negative gestures in a performance. I hate that gesture which says, 'Too loud, too loud!' It shouldn't be necessary. Of course, there is that last degree of juice which it just isn't natural to give in

rehearsal. I'd say the encouragement for that is all in the eyes..."

We'll get a closer look at them through the BBC cameras (as and when the Corporation finally sets a transmission date). In the first of those six programmes that he doesn't want to talk about, we'll see Wigglesworth at work on Rachmaninov's Second Symphony – a long and challenging piece which is all about patience. Patience to let Rachmaninov dictate the pace, patience to defer, to yield, to "the long line". That, he says, is his priority. "The performances I am most proud of are those which go from the first note to the last with no break in continuity or intensity. In fact, you know, the thing I most like about performances, as opposed to rehearsals, is knowing that you are not going to have to stop!" He is much amused by all this talk of patience. He reckons he's the most impatient person he knows.

Not where career management is concerned. His first professional engagement

came a full year after the Kondrashin competition – which, of course, he didn't expect to win ("That's probably why I didn't") – and was, in his words, "a disaster". The rehearsals bore no resemblance to the concert. He lacked authority. "It was a shock dealing with professional musicians much older and more experienced than I was. For the first time, I began questioning whether I should be doing it at all. I came close to calling it a day." Instead, he learnt to hurry slowly, to say "no" more often, to choose pieces that were both "in his temperament" and sufficiently challenging to keep the players concentrated. The Deryck Cooke "performing version" of Mahler's unfinished 10th Symphony, Messiaen's *Turangalila*, Shostakovich's Symphonies Nos 10 and 14.

How does a young conductor arrive in front of the Berlin Philharmonic, or the Amsterdam Royal Concertgebouw, or the Philadelphia Orchestra for the first time? What do you say or not say, do or not do?

There's no answer to that, says Wigglesworth. "You can only be you. I think orchestras make their decisions instantaneously as to whether they are going to have a good time or not. There's no accounting for chemistry." Is youth – or the appearance of youth – a problem? "Only if you're not good enough. Of course, you get better as you get older, but only with experience. So it's very important to find somewhere where you can grow... a haven of sorts..."

Wigglesworth found his in Wales with the BBC National Orchestra. "This was the first orchestra who made me feel they were prepared to collaborate with me, build something with me. They have helped me enormously in creating an environment that is relaxed enough for one to make mistakes. And you have to. As long as your mistakes are honest ones. The cardinal sin is being dishonest and trying to cover up inexperience by pretending that you know all the answers. Orchestras will always see

through that. Of course, you have to be careful not to say 'sorry' too much, because then the players lose confidence in you. But you need to be able to stop and say, 'This isn't working, it's too slow – back to the top.' There's no shame in that. We conductors are forever asking players to make it better – so why not us, too?"

Wigglesworth has been Music Director of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales for just over a year now. And their first big journey together is an ambitious one: a complete cycle of the Shostakovich Symphonies for the enterprising Swedish record label BIS. First off is the Symphony No 7 ("Leningrad") – one of music's bitterest protests, the cry for help which went unheard. The siege of Leningrad. But which siege? Hitler's or Stalin's? According to Shostakovich's controversial memoirs, *Testimony*, Leningrad succumbed to tyranny long before the Third Reich marched in. Tyranny has many faces. But only one tune. As witness the much-maligned first movement where this good-mannered, toe-tapping "humler" undergoes traumatic mutation. It's the most invasive and protracted and utterly mindless crescendo in all music. But Shostakovich wanted mindless – that was the whole point. The old guard in Russia still think it's his worst piece.

So Wigglesworth went in search of answers and came back with more questions. When asked if the piece was as much about Stalin as Hitler, the 80-year-old oboist who played in the first performance replied: "Of course not." She remembers how hungry they all were, though. Of the second movement, "Memories", Wigglesworth enquired of Victor Lieberman (then leader of the Leningrad Philharmonic, now first-chair of the Royal Concertgebouw) and the legendary conductor and teacher Ilya Musin exactly what kind of "memories" these were. "Happy memories," said Musin. "Sad," said Lieberman. Both were close confidants of Shostakovich.

But such ambiguity is the key to Shostakovich's enduring fascination. It's taken until now for the realisation to dawn that the coda of the popular Fifth Symphony is no more, no less, than a big white lie. A hollow victory. Wigglesworth considers that he's somehow failed the symphony if an audience erupts in cheers at the close of a performance. A moment or two of shocked silence would be so much more gratifying. He claims he's managed it on a couple of occasions. But he's still digesting the implications.

Right now there are the other symphonies to digest. Several are new to him. It's a long process, learning the notes, breaking the codes – so far as one can. Wigglesworth studies with score in hand and CD in player – not one performance, he hastens to add, but as many as he can lay hands on. He thinks it's downright arrogant to insist that you never listen to other conductors' recordings. For better or worse, he learns something from each of them. Even so... "What is it about CDs that people are content to accept them as a substitute for the real thing? You wouldn't dream of appreciating a painting by Vermeer or Van Gogh by looking at a reproduction – even a high-quality reproduction – in a book..." That's a good quote. It's not going to sell many CDs, but no matter. Bring back the publicist. Mark Wigglesworth's new BBC NOW recording of Shostakovich's Symphony No 7 is on the BIS label (BIS CD 873).

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David Benedict WEEK IN REVIEW

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critical view

our view on view

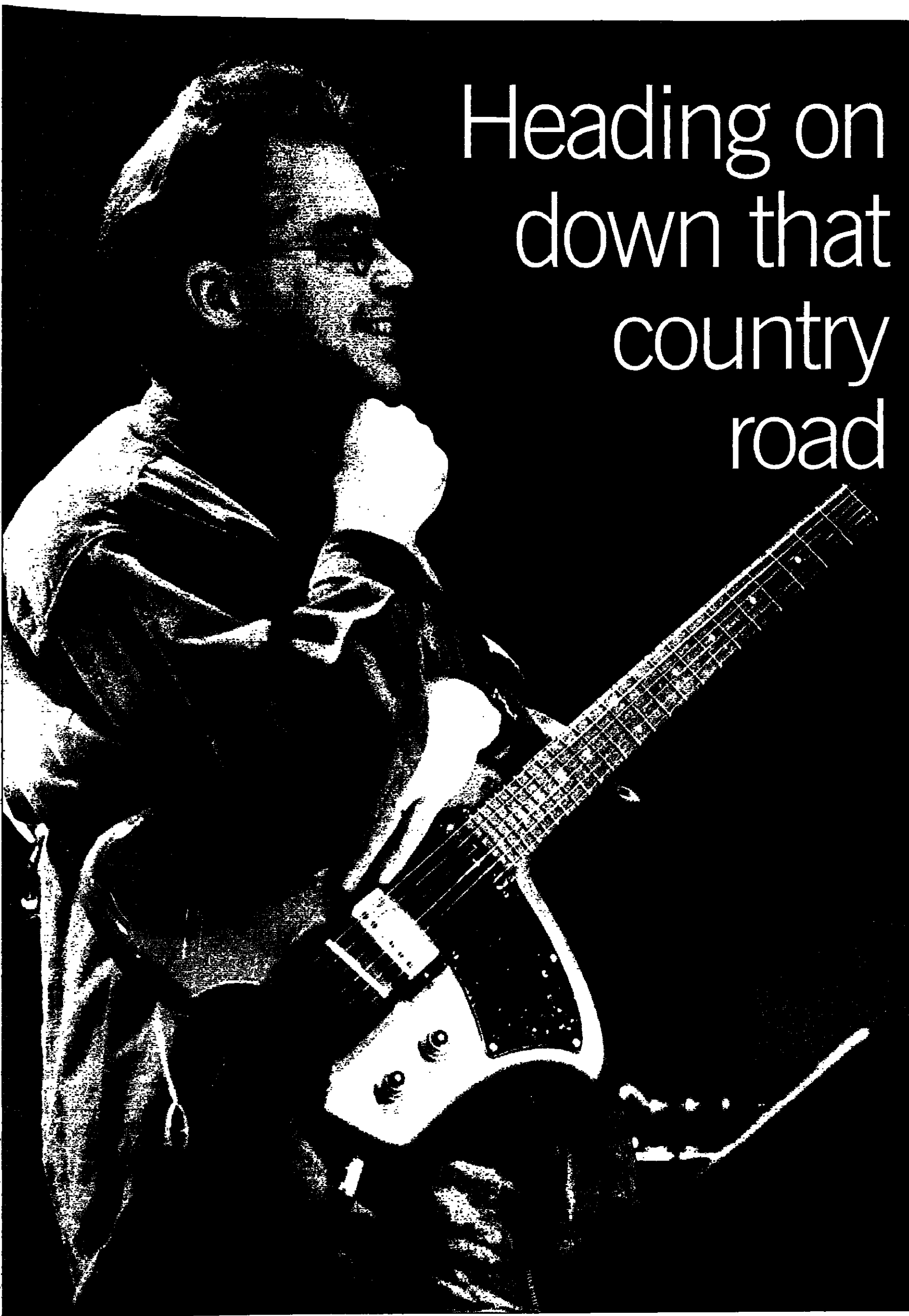
THE FILM	THE MUSICAL	THE EXHIBITION
The Square Circle Sonali Kulkarni is a village girl on the run from a trio of kidnappers who teams up with Nirmal Pandey as a male transvestite who persuades her to escape her plight by dressing as a man. Amol Palekar directs a script by Anglo-Indian Timir Murari that crosses Satyajit Ray with Bollywood.	Always From the producer of the short-lived <i>Tolstoy</i> comes "the ultimate love story" with Clive Carter as Edward VIII and Jan Hartley as Mrs Simpson. Designs by Hildegard Bachtler, costumes by Tom Rand, lighting by Peter Mumford, and choreography by Thommie Walsh, who co-directs with Frank Hauser.	Cathy de Monchaux Collages and objects of desire combining hard and soft stuffs rich in bodily references in a collection of erotic art. Much of it is small and intricate in detail but there are larger-scale constructions that climax (as it were) in a full-blown installation with doorways and peep-holes.
Ryan Gilbey found it "giddy and endearing... driven by an infectiously buoyant spirit and even the incongruous Indian pop songs have a pleasingly spicy aftertaste." "Easy to get caught up in the way it plays every emotion to the hilt... touching, witty, always surprising," cheered <i>Time Out</i> . "Intriguing... worth seeing considerably more than anything else this week," approved <i>The Guardian</i> . "High on parable, adventure and charisma... this hugely likeable sitar-happy tale," beamed the <i>FT</i> . "For all its irritations, it commands interest for sheer curiosity value and the contortions of its plotting," smiled the <i>Telegraph</i> . "There is something quite sweet and touching about it all," opined the <i>Express</i> . "Mild interest and a few yawns," dismissed <i>The Times</i> .	Paul Taylor giggled. "For collectors of straight-faced camp on the grand scale, <i>Always</i> has its moments... I suspect it will have to be renamed <i>Briefly</i> ." "Welsh miners serenade Edward in the manner of the ghoulish King's Singers," smirked the <i>Telegraph</i> . "Songs sound as though James Last has been painfully mated with Richard Clayderman," winced the <i>Mail</i> . "Edward adds that he is 'a man, not a tailor's dummy'... it is difficult to believe him," asserted <i>The Times</i> . "Doesn't quite strike one as being in the <i>Tristan and Isolde</i> league," growled <i>The Guardian</i> . "The lyrics [are] staggeringly banal... Hauser's direly straight-faced production," gagged the <i>Standard</i> . "Jan Hartley gives the most touching and beautiful singing I can remember hearing in a musical," sang the <i>FT</i> .	Tom Lubbock was puzzled by its lack of piquancy. "You can marvel at the craftsmanship, the manipulation of ingredients but, as for the concept, you can only nod in recognition." "De Monchaux's obsessive attention to detail makes you want to get really close to the work... she makes us feel uncomfortable when we get there," praised <i>The Guardian</i> . "She has a virtuoso ability to manipulate her materials... mournfulness can be seasoned with wit in De Monchaux's art," hailed <i>The Times</i> . "Do go and see what she's been up to," urged the <i>Telegraph</i> . "Boasts more sexual preferences than an Ann Summers catalogue," offered <i>The Observer</i> . "More than just a maker of seductive scary trinkets or powerful installations... time unfurls as you walk its length; being is replaced by becoming," intoned <i>Time Out</i> .
Cert 15, 110 mins at the Curzon West End (0171-369 1722)	Victoria Palace, London W1 (0171-834 1317), but theatrical ambulance chasers had better hurry.	At the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London E1 (0171-522 7888) until 27 July.
Not all comedies about gender and sexual identity are as crass as Robin Williams's recent oeuvre.	Jan Hartley and truly excellent sets, lighting and costumes lend a veneer of quality to this shameless farago.	Finely wrought but less disturbing than you expect. None the less, the words "Turner" and "prize" are being banded about.

KEY

EXCELLENT
GOOD
OK
POOR
DREAD

هكذا من الأصل

Heading on down that country road



A bemused Bill Frisell: 'Really the music is all coming from the same place'

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID REDFERN

Purists have reacted with disdain to Bill Frisell's flirtation with Nashville. But it's not such a crazy move for a jazz guitarist, says Phil Johnson

According to the governing stereotypes, jazz and country music belong to very different schools. Jazz, of course, is more the indoors sort, always skiving off games in favour of a drag or worse in the showers, while country is much more robust and public-spirited, despite an alarming tendency to break into tears at the drop of a hat. So when the leading guitarist Bill Frisell, whose last album, *Quartet*, was just about the best jazz record of 1996, chose to follow it with a set recorded completely in Nashville, accompanied by a backing band of New-Country pickers, there was bound to be trouble. And there was.

The first review of the new album that he read, recalls Frisell—who's a very shy, very nice and entirely unshowbizzy man in his middle-forties—was in a newspaper from his home-town of Seattle. "It said I should go and live in Las Vegas," he says sadly. "And that I had sold out and jumped on the country bandwagon." This bandwagon, such as it is, is hardly cutting a swathe through America's Billboard charts. Though recent albums by singer Cassandra Wilson, and by the duo of Charlie Haden and Pat Metheny, have used acoustic instruments and the harmonies of old-time hillbilly music to considerable effect, neither is what you could call a hat-act.

And Frisell's new Nashville is, it should be said, mostly marvellous stuff, in which the guitarist's patent, pedal-driven sound (which launched a thousand imitators, U2's *The Edge* being the most famous of them) is harnessed to a pony and trap of galloping banjo and mandolin to range over a very tasteful territory of hill-billy-jazz. There's a cover version of a Neil Young tune and a hoary old Skeeter Davis hit, but it's hardly a crass commercial cross-over. It's not even really country, but more like bluegrass, the Celtic-derived mountain music made memorable by old-time performers such as Bill Monroe and Doc Watson.

It's not as if Frisell is exactly courting mass-popularity either. His credentials are impeccably those of the New York avant-garde, though over the years he has collaborated on recordings by Elvis Costello, Marianne Faithfull and Ginger Baker. His signature sound of lone-some, ethereal atmospherics was modelled originally on the ambient examples of Brian Eno and Robert Fripp, and he usually plays a custom-made electric guitar (a Klein), with the addition of a digital-delay unit that creates weird, phased effects, rather than the traditional fat-bellied jazz semi-acoustic. "But as part of my mid-life crisis," he says, "I'm going back to the acoustic guitar more and more, and to older jazz players like Jim Hall that I started out listening to."

If Frisell is bemused by the new album's initial reception, he has the look of someone who is bemused by most things. His gentle, broad, bespectacled face and quiet, slightly Western-twanged voice (he's originally from Colorado, so he should be able to be country if he wishes), suggest a marginally more hip John Denver. He's also a friend and neighbour of the *Far Side* cartoonist Gary Larson, and his last album consisted largely of scores for Larson animations. Indeed, you can easily imagine him as one of the cartoonist's perpetually amazed onlookers, staring slack-jawed at

a congress of cowboy-hatted cows drinking coffee in a roadside diner.

The idea for the new album began, he says, when Bob Hurwitz, his record label boss at Nonesuch, introduced him to the President of Asylum Records, Kyle Lehning, with a view to making contacts in Nashville, the country music capital. Links were made with dobro player Jerry Douglas and Lyle Lovett's bassist Viktor Krauss, and an initial jamming session was arranged that eventually, together with one other session, produced the material for the album.

"I never really played country music, even though everyone always makes that reference," Frisell says. "But almost 20 years ago my parents moved to North Carolina, near to where there were lots of fiddle artists and stuff. I really love bluegrass music and Doc Watson actually lives near to my parents, but there's all kinds of musicians there who have regular jobs and just get together to play at weekends, which is something I really appreciate. I love that kind of acoustic stuff and I decided that for the record I would be the only electric instrument, with mandolin, banjo and bass. I didn't know what was going to happen. With my regular band, I'll write the music out but, with these guys, it was more by ear and I was amazed at how easily they learnt it. It was all done in just a couple of days with no rehearsal."

The musicians recorded at Sound Emporium studio in Nashville, setting up in a circle around the mikes as they would have done in the old days. "They just did what they did," Frisell says. "Whatever happened came through the way I played and how they responded to it, and there was a lot of really sensitive playing. There wasn't even any period of adjustment, or of being uncomfortable; it was just really fun and they had this perfect mix of knowing the tradition of the music without being uptight about it. It took courage to play with me because, in country, there's a movement of purism similar to that in jazz, a belief that it has to be the old way—and, if someone tries to break out of that, they can get into trouble. It's like Alison Krauss's band [Union Station, from which some of his players were drawn]: they're so good, but in country they're controversial. But really, the music is all coming from the same place; in the old days even Bill Monroe played jazz."

For his next project, Frisell will continue to defy the purists. He's hooked up with the great rock drummer Jim Keltner, with Viktor Krauss once again on bass, and recorded an album of his own compositions that is rockier than *Nashville*. "My style probably comes more out of the electric guitar," he says. "From Brian Eno things with Daniel Lanois, and from Robert Fripp's stuff when he used two tape recorders and an enormous loop of tape to get that delay." Frisell gets the same kind of delay now from a digital box of tricks, but the effect is still that of an old-style Popular Electronics boffin trying to capture the melancholy sound of distant train whistles and the whispers of wind rattling against a wire fence. And what, you feel, could be more authentically country than that?

'Nashville' is available now on the Nonesuch label (CD 7559 794152)

REVIEWS

Spanish sizzlers

CLASSICAL Ravel Through the Looking-Glass LSO / André Previn Barbican Centre, London

There were giggles galore at Thursday's LSO/Barbican Ravel concert (the last orchestral event in the "Ravel Through the Looking-glass" series), when the portly lover of a clock-maker's wife warbled a high-pitched "cuckoo" from inside a clock-case. David Wilson-Johnson characterised the clumsy advances of one Don Inigo Gomez towards Concepcion, a foxy lady whose saucy cowering dominates Ravel's 40-minute sex comedy *L'heure espagnole*. The libretto, by Franc-Nohain, has Concepcion seduce a muscled muleteer into traipsing her clock-encased lovers up and down the stairs of her shop. Eventually, just wins the day and, while she takes the muleteer, her newly liberated, bleary-eyed lovers fool the returning clock-maker into believing that they were merely inspecting the mechanisms.

Ravel's score is like a vast Scherzo-Habaneña, funny, spicy, full of catchy tunes and magnificently orchestrated, though with little of the pathos or emotional "pull" that makes his other opera, *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, so magical. *L'heure espagnole* is above all a comedy set to music (*L'enfant* is more a tone-poem with words), a heady sequence of jokes and asides—such as, for example, the bulbous bassoon that relates Don Inigo to the "beast" from Ravel's *Mother Goose* ballet, or the big, brassy chords that paint the muleteer's physical prowess, or the tuba that guffaws when Inigo protests, "Do I lack, in your imagination, youth and poetry?"

Frederica von Stade had been scheduled to sing Concepcion—but was indisposed; in her absence—she was indisposed—the Canadian mezzo Kimberly Barber proved a most alluring deputy. Barber proved a most alluring deputy, coy, beguiling, bitchy, full of fun and vocally distinctive. John Mark Ainsley made lyrical music of Gonzave's purple poems, Kurt Oltmann was a rock-

steady muleteer and Georges Goutier, a personable clock-maker. As to André Previn, he paced every comical incident, every outsize gesture as if it were his own creation—and his players followed him all the way.

The concert's first half had ended, appropriately enough, with another Ravelian Spanish sizzler, the dazzling *Rapsodie espagnole*. Previn's rostrum manner precluded any suggestion of tenseness, and yet his supple, crystal-clear conducting, always alert but refreshingly laid-back, encouraged the whole band to break loose and "go for it". The "Prélude à la nuit" shimmered and the "Malagueña" suggested silken hair and curved thighs, but it was the brassy, coltish "Feria" that made for the biggest impact—and the loudest climaxes.

Prior to the *Rapsodie*, Previn treated us to that most adorable of musical tributes, *Le tombeau de Couperin*, rendered orchestral from a rather more substantial piano original and piquant in the extreme. An auspicious curtain raiser, *Le tombeau* granted us a balletically spiralling "Prélude" (with fastidiously terraced dynamics), a carefree "Forlane", a gracious "Menuet" visited by subtle *riardandi* (Previn underlined the ochre glow of Ravel's string writing) and a rustic "Rigaudon" to close. Although light-years removed from the *Rapsodie*'s rioting or Concepcion's cunning, *Le tombeau* has a textural luminosity and harmonic pungency that, in a sense, make an even stronger impression. I could quite happily have left it at that, but then *L'heure espagnole* in particular was a real winner—and I wouldn't have missed that for the world. *Series ends on Wednesday with a chamber music evening, including Ravel's Violin Sonata and Trio. Booking: 0171-638 8891*

Robert Cowan

There's life in the old Boers yet

Ms Evita Bezuidenhout, "the most famous white woman in South Africa", swaggers around regally in a splendeforous silver top that even Gary Glitter might think twice about wearing. "How can I be sorry about apartheid?" she asks snidely. "It had nothing to do with me."

In *Live from Boerassic Park*, Pieter-Dirk Uys, the impish man behind the monstrous woman, has fashioned a show out of that most unfashionable subject for comedians: politics. He must be just about the only stand-up left who is prepared to utter the P-word in public.

But, there again, when you're a South African, it's well nigh impossible to avoid politics. An apolitical act about South Africa would be like a routine on David Meller that didn't mention toe-sucking or Chelsea strips—unthinkable. Delving around in his dressing-up box, Uys takes aim at the dinosaurs who still walk South Africa three years after the end of apartheid.

COMEDY Live from Boerassic Park Tricycle Theatre, London

And he is not short of targets. Putting on a dash of lipstick, a blonde wig, an Alice band and a pout, Uys turns before our very eyes into a Jewish housewife demanding a monument to the work of white liberals like herself during The Struggle. "We stayed here when everybody else fled to London NW3," she moans. "We treated our servants like human beings, in spite of the fact that they behaved like kaffirs."

But black people are not spared his darts, either. Uys marvels at the fact that Winnie Mandela has returned, Lazarus-like, to the political mainstream. "She's bounce-back Winnie," he says, with no little awe, "the bungee-jumping champion of the ANC." He then pulls out a Winnie Mandela souvenir ashtray, which is framed by a mini car-tyre.

While such defiantly non-PC daring is to be applauded, some of Uys's material depends too heavily on an intimate knowledge of South African politics. He even breaks into Afrikaans. Did you know that the South African Health Minister had been implicated in a financial scandal? Did you even know who the South African Health Minister was? No, nor did I. When he broadens his scope, Uys is on more fertile ground. He laughs at the African-American tourists who traipse around his country, behaving like Oprah Winfrey: "They're always in tears." And he weaves what would have happened if the Tories had won: "We in South Africa would have had sanctions against the UK. We would have boycotted Earl Grey tea and refused to listen to the Spice Girls." Politics, it seems, need not be a dirty word for comedians.

To 5 July. Booking: 0171-328 1000

James Rampton

Meet Europe's movers and shakers

There's an episode of *Fawlty Towers* where Basil, faced with a party of German guests, finds himself unable to get through a sentence without mentioning the War. It's the reverse of this syndrome—a compulsive inability to articulate the word "war"—that afflicts one of the orators in *Stunde Null*, Swiss director Christoph Marthaler's surreal speeches-and-slapstick satire, set in a training school for post-war German politicians, which is now brought to LIFT by the Deutsches Schauspielhaus, Hamburg.

The show arose from a request by the German political authorities for a piece to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. A hilarious—yet pervasively sad—send-up of the urge to suppression and evasion can't have been quite what they had in mind. *Stunde Null* means *Zero Hour*: the fallacious idea that German history, pre-1945, could be sponged away and a clean start made. Using extracts from actual speeches delivered in the immediate post-war period, the show mocks the German tendency to pose as the essentially innocent victims of Nazism and to blame the Third Reich for everything, even the continued failure to be honest with themselves.

There's a curious irony here. Gathered in a wood-paneled underground studio—where microphones sprout

THEATRE Stunde Null GEH, SBC, London

out of doors and where men practise their speeches facing the walls in babbling, urinal-like line-ups—the besuited middle-aged trainees are put through their paces by a bustling bossy matron-cum-nanny figure. A strident Beckettian alarm-bell punctuates their physical workouts, in which they perform—with a delectably absurd balletic grace that's only heightened by the unsightliness of their sports-kitted bodies—such statesmanlike exercises as cutting ceremonial ribbons, rolling out and walking down red carpets, and checking that the camera captures their best side.

What you get a strong sense of is helplessness, helplessness and a passivity that veers into a communal regression to childhood. One of the matron's lectures, which are so boring the men slump sideways off their chairs, is about living in caves and what that does to the skin and to the sense of time. You feel that the men here are out of touch, just as if trapped in a cave. But if Marthaler's point is that politicians need to shoulder guilt and responsibility and to stop acting like victims, why does he place these wannabe leaders in a bizarre boarding-school context where their autonomy seems

to have been taken away from them? What power is the matron working for?

The piece is full of music—Romantic period songs which the men sing and hum in exquisite harmonies, yanking the mood from broad knockabout to piercing atavistic nostalgia in a second. True, some of the slapstick routines feel a mite spontaneous. There's a long sequence where the men fight a farcical losing battle with the clapped-out fold-up beds on which they have to spend the night. Like the rest of the piece, it is beautifully orchestrated, each bit of business recurring and modulating as though it were a motif in some complex piece of music. But the sequence would be funnier if the accidents didn't look so deliberate.

You would think, if you didn't know better, that the political speeches, with their barmy *non-sequiturs*, rhetorical appeals to youth and anxious tip-toeing round the real subject, had been invented for the present occasion. Their desperation makes you feel sad rather than contemptuous and certainly never superior. *Stunde Null*, which runs for an unbroken, unburied, deliberately testing two and a half hours, is not just about Germans. *Ends tomorrow. Booking: 0171-960 4242*

Paul Taylor

The Eat a Bull Contest

Justin Wintle finds Dr Freud's prescriptions increasingly hard to swallow

The Memory Wars: Freud's Legacy in Dispute by Frederick Crews et al, Granta, £9.99

Dispatches from the Freud Wars: Psychoanalysis and its Passions by John Forrester, Harvard University Press, £18.95

If you went to a doctor with a persistent cough and he told you the reason for it was you wanted to suck your father's penis; or, in his surgery you developed a nose-bleed and he said you were bleeding with love for him; would you (a) leave immediately? (b) report him to the BMA? or (c) sue? Yet these are things Freud said to some of his women patients. Not at the outset, but after he had imposed his formidable personality on their already disoriented minds. Whenever I hear Freud's name, I reach for my Zen manual. The Victorians entertained notions about childhood and the loss of innocence. With Freud, though, it's more a case of actual theft.

My father was a haemophiliac. Of necessity, he was a gentle man, though scarcely ineffectual. He could never be jostled, let alone hit. Fortunately his character communicated his condition to those around him without his having to advertise it. He encouraged respect, and so did a tolerably active life. Even as a young boy, I knew he was different. There were dreadful episodes when he had to be taken quickly to hospital in terrible pain. As a result, and before I knew much about the pathology of haemophilia, I developed a protective attitude toward him. Later on, I did my best to shield him from the ruffling crowd. And to this day I sometimes have nightmares – real nightmares – about evil befalling him.

But then comes Freud, straight out of the sewer, with his occult claptrap about repression and the Oedipus Complex. Didn't you know, his books tell me, that all along you wanted your father out of the way? That that's why the nightmares continue, as covert wish fulfilment? His illness must have especially deflected his wife's attention away from her son. But your Unconscious has remained busy. Your Unconscious has never stopped devising stratagems for your father's demise.

It's no use arguing. If you argue with Freud or any of his cohorts the answer is unanswerable. The truth is repressed and you are exhibiting resistance. And the more resistance we put up, the further into the lion's maw we fall.

All men are patricidal mummy-bunkers, all women matricidal daddy-shaggers. That's putting it crudely, but as regards Freud's grand theory, the proposition holds good. There's no point discussing it in a rational way, because the laws of reason don't apply to the Unconscious and its contents. The laws that do apply are those discovered by the first man properly to enter therein – Freud – in large measure because he was the first. Since the Hadean voyage is unrepeatable, we have no option but to accept His Word.

Hence the Oedipal Complex is also – as in my adolescence I first misheard, and in keeping with the anecdotal Greekness of it all – an Eat a Bull Contest. There are two bulls in the ring, you and he. The name of the game is to sacrifice one to the other.

A century has passed since Freud created psychoanalysis. For many this has been a cen-

tury too long. The last 15 years particularly have offered convincing refutations of his so-called science. Heavyweight thinkers such as Ernest Gellner and Adolf Grünbaum have shown that psychoanalysis functions as a cult, that its tenets are undemonstrable and its therapeutic claims spurious. Others, like Peter Swales, have investigated the man himself. The picture that emerges is anything but nice. Freud was systematically dishonest, an avaricious megalomaniac who misled his readers, who could brook no dissent among his followers, and who bullied his patients into accepting his ideas.

Yet, as both these new titles testify, versions of Freud still flourish amid the controversy. The more arresting is *The Memory Wars*, a tour de force made up of contributions to the *New York Review of Books*. In 1993 the NYRB published an unprecedentedly long essay by Frederick Crews, "The Unknown Freud", endorsing the latest batch of anti-Freud writings. Inevitably Crews's assessment incited a torrent of rebuttal, mostly from the psychoanalytic community, which had everything to lose.

According to Granta, such was the furore that copies of the NYRB "flew off the stands". Has Stephen Spielberg acquired the film rights? But the real punch was gruesome as well as fantastic. At the heart of Crews's assault was a concern with "recovered memory therapy". Across America, Crews reported, thousands of women had been brainwashed by their mainly feminist analysts into believing they were victims of incestuous child abuse. As a result, charges were pressed, fathers bundled into jail, and families wrecked.

At the end of 1994, Crews answered his critics in a second stand-voiding NYRB essay, "The Revenge of the Repressed". Not since the Salem witch trials of 1692, Crews urged, had the legal system been so duped. And all because of a superstitious belief in the validity of "repression". For us, there are overtones of Cleveland. In the US, analysts again flocked to Freud's cause. *The Memory Wars*, by including their rejoinders, makes some attempt at even-handedness. But in every case Crews insists on having the last word. He parades scientific empiricism to the death. As the debate becomes more acrimonious, one wishes he would devote more of his considerable acumen to the living issue: how to separate real and imaginary cases of child abuse?

"Critics of psychoanalysis seldom see," one of his more revisionist adversaries concedes, "that it is a process of dealing with a wildly moving target from a slightly less wildly moving platform". The mystery is how Freud ever came to be accepted on his own terms in the first place. Mainly this is a cultural mystery: a gratification of this century's cravings for sex, demonology and breakthrough medicine. Better, perhaps, that our dreams should mean what Freud says they mean than that they should mean nothing.

Some, but not too many, clues are provided in John Forrester's scholarly *Dispatches from the Freud Wars*. Here there are excellent essays on Freud's lurid relationship with Sándor Ferenczi, and on Freud the collector of antiquities. It begins, however, with a progressively impenetrable mix-comparison between Freud and the political theorist John Rawls, and ends with a rather washy interview with Freud's ghost. Forrester is on to the old crazy, but doesn't have the horns to finish him off.



Freud with Henny, his daughter-in-law, and Eva, his granddaughter

FREUD MUSEUM ARCHIVE

Washed-up by the bards behaving badly

Life was no bed of daffodils for Romantic womenfolk, as Sue Limb discovers

A Passionate Sisterhood: the sisters, wives and daughters of the Lake Poets by Kathleen Jones, Constable, £20

Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be, Robert Southey sternly warned Charlotte Brontë. I'd better not write this review, then. Silly me. I should stick to shopping lists. Outlets, not couplets. I've made a living from writing for 20 years and yet, two centuries after Southey's veto, it is still so hard to reconcile the demands of a literary career with the needs of a family and household that I am reduced to tears of exasperation at times.

How much more painful and frustrating were the struggles of these women, in an age when female independence was almost unknown, divorce an aberration, contraception an impossibility, disease mysterious, drugs dangerous, and infant mortality 50 per cent. The Wordsworths, Coleridges and Southey's all lost children. Edith Southey's grief at the death of four of her eight children – one at nine, one at 14 – deprived her of her reason. Dorothy Wordsworth also disintegrated into dementia, worn out by physical drudgery and emotional frustration. The next generation fared no better. Dora Wordsworth and Sara Coleridge struggled with eating disorders and drug dependency.

The female Wordsworths and Coleridges were often more brilliant than their famous menfolk, but the universities were closed to them. They had to be content with the role of handmaidens to the great, copying and editing the works of their fathers or brothers. Dorothy offered up the treasury of her own startlingly original notes and felt honoured when William pillaged them. Coleridge's daughter Sara translated a work of South American anthropology from Latin into English and earned a considerable sum by it. The money was used to send her less gifted brother to university.

Sara was a mere girl. On hearing of her birth, Coleridge had "borne the sex with fortitude", even though he had already fathered sons. He declared "the perfection of every woman is to be characterless: creatures who, although they may not always understand you, always feel with you." He demonstrated the splendour of his own character by deserting his wife while their children were still young. It is evident from her comments that his wife understood him all too well.

Mrs Coleridge was given shelter and support by her brother-in-law Robert Southey, but her dependency meant she had to accept his prejudices and judgements too. He would not offer hospitality to her estranged husband nor, later, to her son.

Wordsworth's complacent exploitation of his sister's adoration is well known. Charles Lamb joked that Wordsworth had three wives: Mary, Dorothy and his sister-in-law Sara Hutchinson, whom Coleridge would have liked to recruit as an extra wife also. Wordsworth was particularly tyrannical to his daughter Dora, opposing her marriage until she was in her mid-thirties and already in a consumptive decline.

The foggish chauvinism and tyranny of these poets is the more deplorable because in their youth they had fancied themselves the most radical thinkers in a revolutionary age, and espoused Mary Wollstonecraft's feminist ideals. In the enthusiasm of his honeymoon, Coleridge had even drawn up a schedule of domestic chores, allowing ten minutes at half-past three of washing the dishes. Somehow I feel he was the sort of bloke who would have left egg on the spoons on purpose to demonstrate his romantic incompetence at such work.

Kathleen Jones's loyalty lies entirely with the womenfolk, but she has a rare breadth of sympathy even for the men, noting Wordsworth's tenderness towards his wife, acknowledging Southey's dutiful care of his dependents and pitying Coleridge's disastrous loss of confidence in the face of Wordsworth's criticisms. She handles the mass of diaries and letters with skill and imagination, building up a vivid picture of these extraordinary households and the curious and exotic beings they contained. I feel I have been eavesdropping in Dorothy's scullery and smelt its damp plaster, and banishing dependency with a dab of powder and dash of scent.

Sarah, racy, sexy and smart, has suffered in the eyes of posterity because of bitchy remarks made about her by Dorothy. She emerges from this book as a woman of fortitude, energy and attractive resilience. She had a way with words, playfully inventing a code which has an almost Joycean character. "Has she been in dull company, she describes the conversation of such the stupor as a drizzle of rain. A brook she calls the running splash."

Kathleen Jones sees a deeper significance in this. The exuberant energies of a confined, dependent and frustrated woman could only be expressed by inventing a new world of words. "By inventing a language no one else could understand, she could say anything she liked." Dorothy and Edith escaped into melancholy madness; Sarah into a carefully-controlled craziness. Indeed, these women's lives seem a kind of crazy paving of fractured personalities over which their menfolk walked serenely into the admiration of posterity. This is a fascinating, marvellous, utterly absorbing book.

From biker gangs to mob clans: Laura Thompson (left) and Ian Thomson on women in a man's world

The mild one who revved up for an uneasy ride

Artichokes with the Godmothers

The Perfect Vehicle by Melissa Holbrook Pierson, Granta, £10.99

It isn't hard to imagine how this book would have seemed like a good idea. My first reaction was that I could almost hear the sexy phrase to which *The Perfect Vehicle* could be reduced: something like "Memoirs of a Girl on a Motorcycle". Great idea, right? Therein lies the problem, because books shouldn't be ideas. They should contain ideas; but they shouldn't be capable of reduction to a phrase that encapsulates their *raison d'être*. Indeed, I wonder if the ease with which a book can be sales-pitched forms some sort of inverse relationship to its merit.

The Perfect Vehicle would have made an interesting article, or a good, much shorter book (it manages to fill 237 pages). Within its over-inflated mass, there is a precise and charming story: that of an American woman, sensitive and solitary, who falls in love with a motorbike freak. She finds, when the relationship has painfully ended, that motorcycling continues to release into her blood the slow, sweet stream of self-realisation.

The book could have taken this story as its centre. It could have examined the delicious collision (if that is not an unfortunate word) between a withdrawn personality and an activity defined by noise, thrust and movement. Instead, this story is merely glimpsed from time to time, hinted in such passages as this: "From my mother I learned to write prompt thank-you notes for a variety of occasions; from Mrs King's ballroom dancing school I learned a proper curtsy and, believe it or not, what to do when presented with nine eating utensils at the same place setting ... from motorcycles I learned everything else."

This is the opening paragraph of the first chapter, and it makes the reader want to know more. Thereafter, instead of taking us for a short and satisfying spin, *The Perfect Vehicle* veers as disconcertingly as



Motorbiking: 'good for the female complexion'

KOBAL

a skidding Harley-Davidson. It moves from autobiography to sporting history, from diaries of journeys through the US to descriptions of rallies that reek of oil and machismo (and whose fascination is inadequately conveyed), from complaints against the motorbike's negative image to attempts to explain its metaphorical significance.

In so doing, the book tells us the odd fascinating fact: motorcycling was, in its early days, encouraged for women because it was thought to be good for the female complexion, while Mussolini exhorted his officials to become "motorised centaurs" as a way of getting closer to the Italian public.

Unfortunately, the telling phrase above is not the author's. Nor is the one that likens activities such as motorcycling to the place where "existence (is) both

supreme and valueless" (Charles Lindbergh, in fact). Melissa Holbrook Pierson's prose style tends, like her narrative, to be buried within a mixture of shapeless self-indulgence and unnecessary self-restraint. She waxes at length about "the pure pleasure of moving", for example, but when telling us about a photograph of black motorcyclists, she writes: "Well, it does no good to describe it. Just look."

In the end, everything about *The Perfect Vehicle* gives the impression that, while wanting to work out the nature of her obsession, the author had no clear notion of what she wanted to convey to readers. Perhaps, if this book's "idea" had been considered as its starting-point, rather than its be-all and end-all, the final product would have been quite different and infinitely better.

Mafia Women by Clare Longrigg, Chatto & Windus, £16.99

Some say the Mafia is a grotesque parody of Mediterranean family life. Cooking comes into it. Cosa Nostra clans are often called *cosche*, after the Sicilian dialect for artichoke. The clans all fit snugly inside each other, tightly bound like an overlapping of leaves. For rival *cosche*, there is strength in numbers. So families must be large; the women must be strong; and the children had better be male.

Most books on the Cosa Nostra tend to exaggerate. Mafia women are dressed in black (the sinister weeds of widowhood) and sometimes they have a *soupcion* of a moustache. Or they are biological wonders with countless offspring and cauldrons of spaghetti. The Mafia matriarch is bad and dangerous to know.

Mafia Women recycles familiar information about blood vendettas and pseudo-Masonic initiation rituals. Most of the women here are either man-eating vixen or frumpy grandames. Women do often run the family in remoter parts of Sicily. Far from the ministerial benches of Rome, and any effective government, the family thrives just like the Mafia. And the Mafia mother's son can develop an infantile dependence called *mammismo*. Hence the northern Italian joke that Jesus Christ must have been Sicilian because he lived at home until he was 30 and presumed his mother was a virgin, while she certainly believed he was God.

Clare Longrigg has interviewed numerous Mafia women in Naples and the Sicilian capital of Palermo. "In the name of equality, I wanted women to be given a fair trial: in the dock with the men," she says. Women have been complicit in loan-sharking, labour and protection racketeering

since Italy's unification in 1861. This is not surprising. The Mafia is deeply woven into the social, political and cultural fabric of the nation, involving favouritism and *clientelismo* in all walks of life.

Longrigg gives an amusing account of a Camorra wedding in Naples, where the newly-weds have come from the city's Casbah area known as the Forcella. However, we get no sense of the Forcella's beetling, black market activity or its obscure exuberance of life. Maybe we need to the age-old poverty of Naples and the decay of its civic values have allowed the Camorra to thrive. Likewise, though much of *Mafia Women* was written in Palermo, the city is curiously absent from the narrative. Palermo's centre remains untouched since the Allies bombed it in 1943 and the slums are shell-pocked and poor. But the reader is only aware of this from an air-conditioned distance.

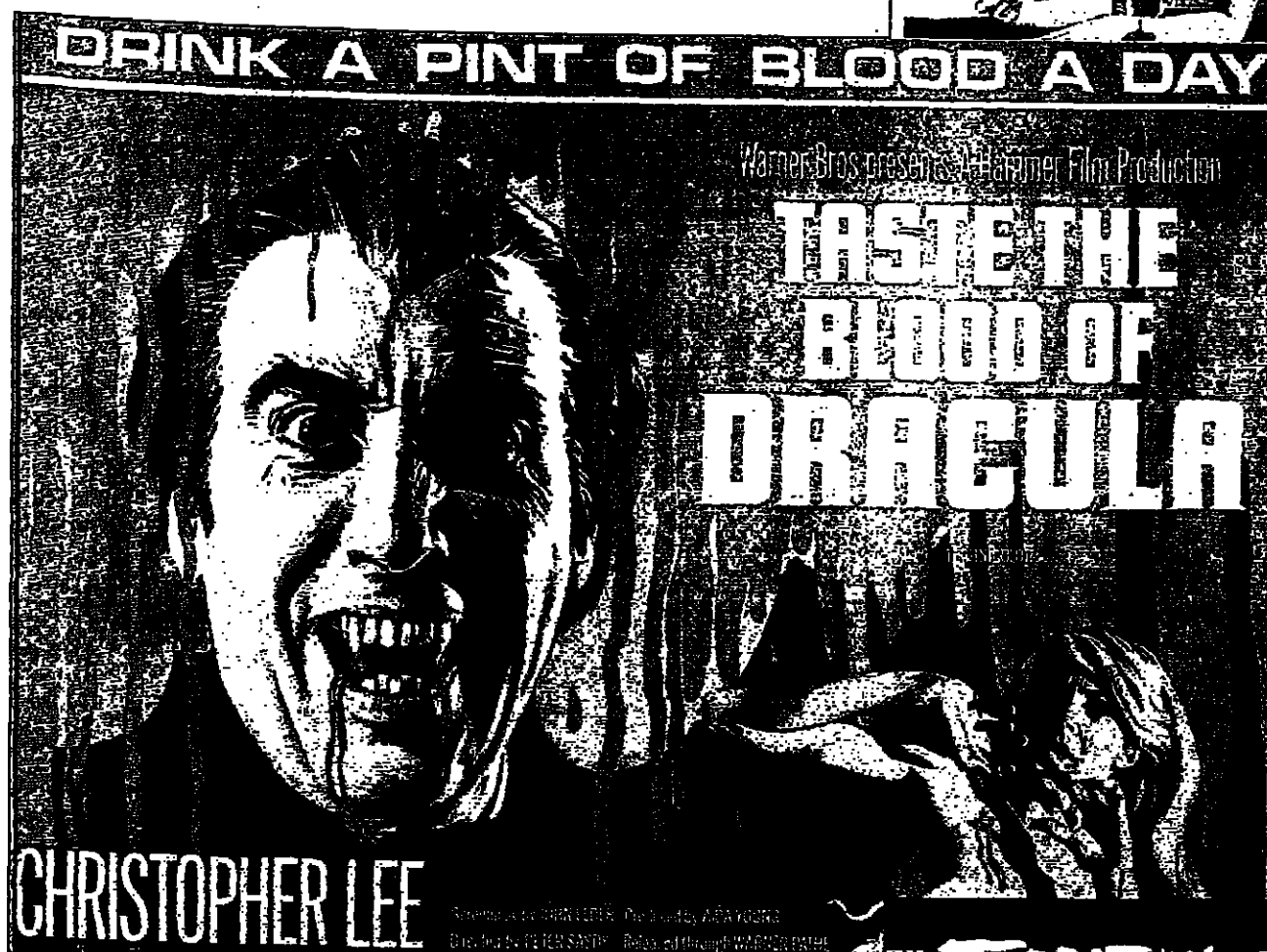
In fairness to Longrigg, *Mafia Women* does not pretend to be social reportage. It consists of interviews and some history. There is perhaps a little too much hyperbole. A lawyer's voice, for example, is "shot to hell by cigarettes", while a woman's eyes are "small and hard as bullets" (she's a Cosa Nostra widow, of course). A more serious book could have been written on Mafia women, combining the meticulous research of, say, Alexander Stille's *Excellent Cadavers* and the trenchant social enquiry of Giuliana Saladino (one of the heroines of Palermo's youth reform).

At least Mafia studies have come a long way since 1928, when the *New York Times Magazine* reported that the Cosa Nostra had originated among ancient Greek settlers in Sicily with Pythagoras as boss. *Mafia Women* is competent journalism, and grimly readable, if a little lightweight for its subject.

Dracula is 100 this month. Kim Newman celebrates the Count's birthday and (right) Peter Parker explodes the legend of his sanguinary sister



The Dracula business in action (clockwise from top): 'Countess Dracula'; Count Dracula stalks the Kings Road in 'Dracula AD 1972'; 'I love to see the blood spurt' said one punter after the premier showing of 'Dracula', starring Peter Cushing, in 1958; terrified young ladies from finishing school depicted in the film poster advertising 'The Brides of Dracula', the 1960 rewrite of 'Disciple of Dracula'; and 'Drink a Pint of Blood a Day', the 'absurd slogan' coined for the 1970 film 'Taste the Blood of Dracula', 'indicated that Hammer's traditional gothic horrors were becoming perceived as ironic exercises'. All taken from 'The Hammer Story' by Marcus Hearn and Alan Barnes with a Foreword by Christopher Lee (Titan Books, £24.99)



NEW FROM HAMMER!
THE TIME: NOW
THE PLACE: KINGS ROAD, CHELSEA
THE KILLER: COUNT DRACULA



Fangs ain't what they used to be

One hundred years ago this month, Constable & Company first published Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Though not an immediate hit, it was a steady seller throughout the rest of Stoker's life (he died the week the Titanic went down, in 1912) and has remained constantly in print. *Dracula* picked up popularity in the 1920s, adapted for the stage and plagiarised for the cinema by F W Murnau as *Nosferatu*; and the 1930s, when Bela Lugosi leered over his black cloak in the most famous Hollywood version. Subsequent generations, especially in the cinema, have reworked the character: courtesy of Christopher Lee, Frank Langella, Klaus Kinski, George Hamilton, Gary Oldman, the Count from *Sesame Street*...

This month sees the publication of a slew of *Dracula*-related items. Peter Haining and Peter Tremayne's *The Un-Dead: The Legend of Bram Stoker and Dracula*, from the still-extant firm of Constable (£16.99), is a partial biography that speculates on the specific influences that shaped the novel. W W Norton have a "critical edition" of the original text, edited by Nina Baym and David J Skal (£6.95), complete with footnotes and essays that reveal the thriving state of *Dracula* scholarship. Leonard Wolf's *Dracula: The Connoisseur's Guide* (a US import from Broadway Books) takes a longer and thinner view, yet again assessing how the *Dracula* legend came to be and what has been done with it. And *The Mammoth Book of Dracula* (Robinson, £6.99), edited by Stephen Jones, is a collection in which current authors (including me) revitalise or rebash the theme.

Anniversaries are a spur to publishers eager to cash in on slow blips of publicity, but the fascination of *Dracula* is such that, without exception, these authors and editors have been here before. Haining wrote a *Dracula Centenary Book* in 1987 (which he reckoned as the centenary of the events of the novel, though internal evidence suggests 1885 or 1893) and Tremayne three *Dracula* novels (including a prequel, *Dracula Unborn*).

Auerbach (*Our Vampires, Ourselves*) and Skal (*Hollywood Gothic, Vis for Vamp*)

are respected *Dracula* scholars, as is Christopher Frayling (*Vampires, Nightmares: The Birth of Horror*), one of their essayists. Wolf wrote the pioneering *A Dream of Dracula* 25 years ago and also produced an annotated edition. Meanwhile, Jones edited *The Mammoth Book of Vampires* and wrote *The Illustrated Vampire Movie Guide*.

Clearly, the hypnotic fascination of the vampire theme is such that writing a single book is never enough. This serial authorship recalls Charlie Chan's dictum that "murder is like a potato chip; you cannot stop at just one". Alternatively, the *Dracula* business is such a cash machine, even after 100 years, that it is an irresistible temptation to keep worrying the wound, as authors and publishers continue their leech-like predation on the book-buying *Dracula* public. It is perhaps more surprising that, though each of these books has its strength and weaknesses, they are all worth reading.

The last big fad of *Dracula* scholarship, popularised by Radu Florescu and Raymond T McNally's *In Search of Dracula*, was the link between Stoker's character and the historical Vlad Dracula, charmingly aka The Impaler. This odd but interesting sidetrack appealed greatly to the fans' need to believe that there was a real *Dracula*, and has been used by a series of fictions, from novels by Tremayne and myself to the Francis Coppola film, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. The fact, however, is that Stoker just liked the sound of the name (which improved on his first-draft villain, Count Wampyr) and then tossed in a few - mostly wrong - historical details to suggest the vampire's great age.

The current flood of scholarship has tended to look away from the Vlad connection and even middle European vampire folklore. Now, the favoured approach - taken by Haining & Tremayne, Frayling and Wolf - is to examine the minor but potent 19th-century tradition of vampire literature, from Dr Polidori's *The Vampire* through the penny-dreadful *Varnae* the *Vampire* to Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, and then delve into the character and circumstances of Stoker himself. *Dracula* is one of those books that synthesises what



has gone before, incorporating bits from all three earlier vampire tales - not to mention poaching a structure from Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*. It adds and overhauls so much that it now seems a beginning rather than a culmination.

Tremayne and Haining concentrate on Stoker's background: his Irish heritage, the books he read, places he visited (Castle *Dracula* turns out to be Crusen Bay in Scotland). Wolf and Skal delve into Stoker's psychology, tentatively concluding from a letter he wrote to Walt Whitman, his lifelong devotion to his employer Henry Irving (playing Renfield to Irving's *Dracula*) and a few biographical parallels with Oscar Wilde (who had proposed to the woman Stoker married), that the author was a closeted homosexual, and that the book is awash with homoerotic subtexts.

Though this evidence is convincing, nothing conclusive is offered (the novel has a lot of seethingly perverse heterosexuality). In any case, the theory fails to provide a definitive reading of a text so complex that a single approach simply can't unpick the lock.

Of course, Anne Rice and others have

added new images to the vampire genre Stoker popularised. The most recent wave of Goth fiction includes the clubbing undead of Nancy Collins (*Sunglasses After Dark*), Poppy Z Brite (*Lost Souls*) and the latest, Todd Grimsom's *Skinless* (Quartet, £9). Several contributors to *The Mammoth Book of Dracula* offer a tired, gentlemanly, withdrawn Count, appalled by the horrors of the 20th Century (though Stoker's character would have revelled in them), which suggests that the centenary has conferred a certain respect but also a sense of obsolescence.

We have had *Dracula the Monster*, *Dracula the Lower*, *Dracula the Comedian* and *Dracula the Hero*. Now, we may have to face the possibility of *Dracula the Redundant*. Certainly, it is hard to conceive of much of a need for more books about Bram Stoker and his creation, though, of course, Count *Dracula* has always displayed an uncanny ability to renew himself with each return from the grave. It would be a mistake to assume him gone forever, or even that his momentary enfeeblement in the shadow of the millennium will see him finally banished.

A myth that is virgin on the ridiculous

'Countess Dracula': The life and times of Elisabeth Báthory, the Blood Countess by Tony Thorne, Bloomsbury, £17.99

Although this distinction is ignored on the dust-jacket, Tony Thorne has very deliberately placed inverted commas around the title of "Countess Dracula". Her family crest may have been a dracula, or little dragon, but Elisabeth Báthory (1560-1614), a Hungarian aristocrat whose uncle was king of Poland, has nothing to do with Bram Stoker's bloodsucking Count nor the historical *Dracula*, Vlad Tepes, a fearsome warrior noted for impaling his victims on stakes.

After she was arrested in 1610, various witnesses described how Countess Báthory thrived on cruelty, arranging for hapless young women to be brought to her castle and tortured for her pleasure. She was said to have overseen the mutilation and murder of as many as 650 "maiden", several of whom she dealt with personally, thrusting needles under their nails and heated laundry irons into their vaginas, sewing up their mouths and tongues, dousing them in freezing or scalding water and tearing their flesh with tongs.

One witness claimed that victims were made into sausages and served up at the Countess's table. Several of her accomplices were tortured and then executed, but Báthory herself was sentenced to life imprisonment in her own castle at Castle Chateau.

Báthory's insatiable bloodlust was appropriated by legend: unlike Count *Dracula*, who needed only the occasional rejuvenating nip, the Countess was supposed to regard virgins' blood much as Cleopatra did asses' milk. In fact, although her castle was said to be awash with blood, no one at the time actually accused her of keeping young and beautiful by filling her bathtub with the stuff and having a good wallow.

This refinement appears to have been invented, or at any rate first aired in print, by a Jesuit priest in a work of topography published 130 years after her death, just as the "early stirrings of a gothic sensibility" were being felt in

Europe. As Thorne points out: "One of the prosaic objections to the idea of a cosmetic blood bath is that blood quickly coagulates, making immersion in gore an excessively messy and unpleasant experience."

Robust scepticism and attention to detail are the hallmarks of this even-handed book. According to Thorne, Báthory's real offence was that she had too much property and power. The real villain, he contends, is Count Gyorgy Thurzo, Palatine of Hungary, a thoroughly bad lot whose career seems to have been built on ruthlessness and treachery.

Having arrested Báthory, Thurzo coerced and tortured witnesses, failing to conduct a proper trial. As soon as Báthory was locked up, Thurzo's wife broke into the Countess's treasury and made off with money and valuables.

The case against Báthory remains unproven. Thorne suggests that many of the depositions collected by Thurzo were inconsistent and unreliable and that much reported by witnesses was little more than hearsay. A further complication is that in Hungarian there is no differentiation between third-person pronouns, while the language's causative structure is ambiguous, which leaves much of the written testimony unclear. Báthory was probably a harsh mistress, but in early 17th century Hungary the lives of servants were regarded as dispensable. Young women died from all sorts of fevers and illness, and some of the "tortures" may have been amateur attempts at healing.

Thorne's scholarly but very readable book gives a fascinating account of the splendours and brutalities of life in Central Europe at this period. He provides a historical and cultural framework for this squalid story, discussing witchcraft and folklore and investigating other cases involving women whose reputations were blackened to deprive them of their estate. The real Elisabeth Báthory turns out to be a rather less sensational figure than *Die Blutgräfin* of legend, but she nevertheless emerges as a remarkable person in her own right.

At the start of Jim Crace's new novel, five travellers are making their way through the Judean wilderness, preparing to spend 40 days in seclusion, fasting and prayer. Four plan to break their fasts each dusk. The fifth, who remains apart, intends to maintain total abstinence during the entire "quarantine".

Quarantine is a novel with two distinct strands. The first - and most successful - concerns the four fictional travellers: Marta, a young woman desperate for a child after ten years of barrenness; Aphas, an elderly man hoping for a miracle cure for cancer; Shim, a fair-haired Gentile searching for inner peace; and a mysterious mute, Badu.

The second strand concerns the fifth traveller, Jesus, who - according to Christian tradition - spent 40 days in the desert at the start of his ministry. That Crace takes a different view is clear from the epigraph which states that no human body could last for more than 30 days without food and drink.

Nevertheless, Crace sticks to the gospel account in several respects. His Jesus is

The Devil has all the best dunes

Michael Arditti is led into temptation and delivered from evil

Quarantine by Jim Crace, Viking, £16.99

tempted by Satan, albeit in the very human shape of Musa, a merchant who is travelling to Jericho. Deemed to be suffering from an incurable fever, he is left for dead by his relations, along with Miri his pregnant wife, only to be revived by a touch from Jesus. Crace allows Jesus no sense of divinity (he considers himself not the Son of God in his own right but His nephew by dint of his race) and implies that faith (or, more accurately, credulity) is in the heart of the believer. He deliberately courts ambiguity in his description of Jesus expelling "the devil's air" from Musa's

chest, leaving the reader to separate metaphor from reality.

Musa's recovery provides the motor of the book. Even in writing as consistently accomplished as this, the Devil has all the best prose. He is as close to pure evil as is possible in Crace's humanistic scheme, tyrannising his fellow travellers, claiming property rights over the common land, turning everything into money. He personifies materialism, yet it is he who leads the others in the quest for Jesus.

Here, as in the earlier *Continents*, Crace's landscape painting is magnificent. His imagery, whether comparing the moon to "the thinnest melon slice, hardbacked, translucent,

colourless", or recounting the effects of fasting which cause Jesus' teeth to "become as loose as date stones", is masterly. As a recreation of an ancient culture and an expansion of a biblical story, *Quarantine* is worthy to stand beside *The Four Wise Men*, Michel Tournier's classic account of the Journey of the Magi.

Crace's imagination falters only with Jesus. It is significant that the other characters usually see Jesus at a distance or through a heat-haze, since the author fails to bring him into full focus. Overall, this Jesus seems to be a cross between one of Dostoevsky's holy fools and a Sixties dropout. He is given some amusingly human characteristics, such as clumsiness and

dirty nails. What he isn't given is any autonomous inner life. When he envisages his future, it is always in terms of conventional biblical imagery or actions the gospel Jesus performed, like the cleansing of the Temple. This militates against the revisionist portrait in the novel as a whole.

Unlike Kazantzakis's *The Last Temptation of Christ*, which uses an alternative temptation to explore faith, Crace uses one to explore credulity. The result cannot but be reductive. Irrespective of religious truth, there is bound to be artistic diminution when Jesus is turned into a priggish would-be rebel with a weak bladder nicknamed Gally and the Devil is domesticated.

Nevertheless, the context of their encounter provides ample compensatory pleasures. Crace's powers of description are as awesome as the landscape he evokes. The reader, like the traveller, may fail to find spiritual enlightenment, but he leaves his *Quarantine* intellectually stimulated and imaginatively enriched.

Paperbacks



By Christopher Hirst
and Emma Hagestadt

How to Tell When You're Tired by Reg Theriault (Norton, £9.95) Partly shrewd analysis but mainly old-fashioned tale-spinning, this quirky contribution to the literature of labour tells you more than a hundred academic studies. A San Francisco dockworker for over 30 years, Theriault has garnered a rich cargo of anecdotes. We learn of sexy goings-on in a cotton field and the reality of safety in the workplace: "the rest of the day that finger was found in the most unlikely places until someone fed it to a seagull." Witty and profoundly wise, Theriault is a working-class Wilde.

Jack: a life of C S Lewis by George Sayer (Hodder, £8.99) Written by a friend of Lewis, the admiring tone of this dogged portrait is punctuated by the odd, startling indiscretion: "It was here [public school] that he began to masturbate, a practise that continued for years afterwards." The life of this tweedy academic was scarcely adventure-packed – though Sayer once saw him deliberately misdirect a fox hunt. The plodding humour of the Inklings is particularly hard to take. In a new introduction, Sayer savages A N Wilson's recent "utterly destructive" biography of Lewis.

The Dancer Upstairs by Nicholas Shakespeare (Picador, £6.99) Looking for a scoop to end his stint in South America, English journo John Dyer has the good fortune to bump into Colonel Rejas – the man who has devoted his life to the capture of the notorious Peruvian guerrilla leader, President Ezequiel. Over breadsticks and cold beer Rejas tells his story. Like most novels set in South America, the politics get a little confusing, but happily Shakespeare is better on taciturn waiters and depressed husbands than the perpetrators of Andean atrocities. The sequel to *The Vision of Elena Silves*.

The Oxford Dictionary of Local and Family History by David Hey (£5.99) Aimed at the amateur historian, this eclectic trawl is a peculiar assortment of the recondite and the mundane. Prompting memories of 1966 and *All That*, the book draws together such archaic terms as "scutage" (fee in lieu of military service), "jagger" (pack-horse man) and "wepentake" (Danelaw taxation district). It is interesting to learn that "gore" is a "triangular piece of land", but the value of entries for "potato" or "postcard" is less certain.

Mister Sandman by Barbara Gowdy (Flamingo, £5.99) Margaret Atwood, Carol Shields and Alice Munro look like maiden aunts when compared with Barbara Gowdy. Canada's latest unruly export. Her second novel introduces the Canary sisters, Joan (she lives in a cupboard), Marcy (she fancies the babysitter) and Sonja (she's really Joan's mother), not to mention their equally interesting parents – Doris and Gordon, both in the throes of homosexual affairs.

An Unquiet Mind by Kay Redfield Jamison (Picador, £7.99) "Within three months of becoming a professor [of psychiatry], I was a raving psychotic." This insider's view of manic depression is written with crystalline clarity. Despite her professional success, Jamison's life has been filled with torments, her frenetic highs matched by suicidal depressions. Lithium provided a partial escape from this vicious cycle but, she adds, "love is... ultimately more extraordinary." While insisting that "depression is awful beyond words", Jamison finds some merit in her madness.

Audiobooks



The "motivational" audiobook is here to stay. Sales suggest that we now all drive to work or jog to the velvety-voiced exhortations of the new magnetic mentors. Some are over-priced, under-length and insultingly manipulative, others popularise new insights into the mind very effectively. Power-reading, mental-mapping and a rest before work are among many ideas in Colin Rose's *Accelerated Learning Techniques* (Simon & Schuster, 3hrs, £9.99). Examinees will lap it up, but it is just as applicable to learning to sail or to speak Suomi. Susan Jeffers's *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway* (S&S, 1hr, £8.99) offers provocative food for thought, encouraging personal responsibility and challenging the culture of caution that cripples so many adventurous initiatives.

Christina Hardyment

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A bridegroom, wryly observed by an angelic-looking ring bearer, practises for a wedding in Beaufort, South Carolina. From 'Black in America' by Eli Reed (Norton, £22), in which the 'Magnum' photographer charts the changes – and the enduring deprivation – that he witnessed in 16 years reporting on African-American life

All dressed up, nowhere to go

Miranda Seymour on a natty but static stylist

Soon to be a Major Motion Picture by Jonathan Keates, Chatto & Windus, £12.99

All that is best about Jonathan Keates' stories is on show in "It's Never You", the seventh in this glittering collection. Cal and Tom are a young, intensely self-aware gay couple to whom style is everything. A New York apartment is their goal; when Keates introduces them, they are lounging on a dusty stretch of grass on Clapham Common. Glamour, so far, has stepped no nearer than a rare opportunity for one to ignore a celebrity in the restaurant where he works as a waiter.

The twist, deliciously managed, comes when the waiter's day out leads him into another world. Adrift among jam-selling matrons at a garden fete, eyed by the little girl from the manor house who identifies him as a homosexual and promptly hands him a copy of *Cranford*, the stylish urban boy begins to sense that appearance may not, after all, amount to everything.

That, at least, is what the story seems to be about: the surface of Keates's fictions gives off such an intense shimmer that it isn't always easy to be sure what, if anything, is going on below. "La Dolce Prospettiva", another little masterpiece of elusiveness, stands neatly between Henry James and Tennessee Williams. Here, Keates examines the motives and desires of a homosexual art historian at the moment when his wealthy patroness is expecting him to declare his love. Behind them, at the altar of a Venetian church, an Italian woman curses the aloof madonna she holds responsible for her lover's death.

"The Cherry Thief", one of the most bewitchingly obfuscatory of the tales, witnesses the life of an Italian family through the gift and loss of some magnificent cherries. Their boredom and frustration is made exquisitely palpable by the Proustian young narrator through whose eyes we look.

Boredom itself becomes the subject in "Les Osages". Keates's account of a ravishing young Senegalese lady's research for a history of mental fatigue. The detail is as rich and intricate as the case of a Fabergé egg: Estifania's mythical history as a muse, model and mistress is presented with breathtaking elegance and panache.

Less successful is "What Avi Told Me", in which a Golders Green orthodox Jewish boy hangers after the more cultured and decadent life of the Kensington Bassanos, who mix with Gentiles and care about Art. The division here is a bit crude; where the story lets him down is in the obviousness of the dénouement, about decadence in Avi's own family. Plot, as this tale demonstrates, is not Keates's strength, but neither, one can't help feeling, is it his driving interest.

Avi's attitude to his parents and the disillusion they cause him take second place to the presentation of externals, the significance of his feeling "a total dude in my new Hugo Boss" or seeking "some well fit birds" on Hampstead High Street. As with almost all of the stories, we know a good deal more about Avi's appearance than about his nature.

The scenery and background to each of the nine tales is beautifully presented; the narratives and the characters left me in a state of worried detachment, wondering what was missing. It's as though, in his meticulous, passionate registering of details and



Jonathan Keates: 'elusive'

nuances, Keates has lost concern with his protagonists and their motives, allowing them to become cyphers in an elegant dance of allusions.

But this, Keates might argue, is precisely his intention. These stories are about people whose secret fantasy is to become someone else. The hollowiness which suggests itself as a weakness is, in fact, a testimony to the skill of the author's creation.

Perhaps. Yet, if we are to understand the craving to shed their skins which these characters are supposed to feel, we need to be able to sympathise and to believe in them. I did not. Brilliant though the detail is, it acts as a veil behind which motives are only dimly perceptible.

The blurb draws an analogy with the art of cinema indicated in the title. Unwittingly, the allusion points the flaw. This is cinema as it would be if it was the creation of the stylist, the skilled designer of settings who places everything, selects a sympathetic colour scheme, ensures that no detail mars the correctness of the whole. All that escape the stylist's creation – and Keates's dazzling fictions – are the vulgar, simple elements for which cinemagoers pay: a story they can swallow and characters they can understand.

Chilled out by a wicked generation

Carole Angier witnesses another smash-and-grab raid

Visitors by Anita Brookner, Cape, £15.99

Anita Brookner keeps writing the same novel. But it is such a good novel that it's always worth rereading. And perhaps it is slowly and subtly changing, as she and her heroines move – in the opening words of *Visitors* – towards evening. Her central theme has always been a piquant inversion of the struggle between good and evil, in which good is bad – cold, fearful, life-denying – and bad is good – brave, joyous, fully human. Her heroines are the battlegrounds for this struggle: drawn towards selfishness, sex and charm, but unable to give, or risk, pain.

Anita Brookner is a modern Jane Austen, constantly rehearsing the battle between sense and sensibility, but inclined to let sensibility win. The Brookner heroine is like a Jean Rhys woman trapped inside a Jane Austen one: an exotic, helpless girl obliged to be a dull and decent woman, Fanny Price concealing Antoinette Cosway.

In *Visitors*, the Brookner heroine is Thea May, a spinster until she was 40, now a widow in her seventies. Like (for instance) Maud of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, she has had her youthful fling with a bad but passionate man. As with all Brookner heroines, this was more life than she could bear. She is proud, intelligent, obedient and lonely, the "brave soldier" her dying mother urged her to be. Her husband, Henry, has been dead 15 years; her only remaining contacts are with his cousins, gentle silly Molly and monstrous, manipulative Kitty.

One of the journeys we make with Thea is towards pity and love for Kitty, whose own possessive, controlling love has driven her son Gerald away. The second is the one invoked in the title. Gerald's daughter Ann returns from the US, asking to be married from Kitty's house. Ann, her born-again fiancé David and their hanger-on friend Steve are the visitors who, with their youth and sub-American culture, upset the delicate balance of the old people's lives and show them something at the same time worse and better.

The first journey makes *Visitors* reminiscent of *A Family Romance* and its heroine, Dolly. Henry's name was originally Meyer (as was Dolly's); two generations ago his family, like hers, was Viennese, and clearly Jewish. Thus the form of spoiled and selfish charm which both appeals and touches English Thea of *Visitors*, as it did English Jane in *A Family Romance*, is Mitteleuropean, vintage 1920s-1930s, the peak Freudian years. I can attest that it is wholly authentic. If you have any Swiss Cottage connections, you will laugh and cry over Kitty.

The second journey introduces a new version of the Brookner battle between half-dead Good and vital Bad: the battle between youth and age. Here the dynamic is slightly different. Ann, David and Steve are far from charming: they are entirely free from the desire to please. They think in terms of rights, not duties, especially for women. This calls for a good deal of irony from Thea (and, one feels, from Brookner: "Those were the balcony days... before hurt feelings led to industrial tribunals, before a compliment was perceived as sexual harassment"). But it also calls forth their admiration, even their love. This is the old Brookner tension: still dramatic, because still unresolved.

And yet a step has perhaps been taken towards resolution. For Thea moves towards love not only for Kitty, and for the young people – that is, for sensibility – but also for herself: that is, for sense. *Visitors*, like all Brookner novels, is full of the heroine's regret for her pale and self-protective choices, for her lifelong fear of an intruder, which is realised, finally, in Steve. But it ends with an acceptance of all these things. Thea doesn't avoid joy, as she once self-mockingly says; she just finds it in small things – a bird on the lawn, a conversation with Kitty. And that, as Steve would say, is cool too.

Independent choice: short stories

By Adrienne Blue

Victor Hugo said somewhere that when a butterfly stamps its foot in Europe, there is a tempest in Asia. The butterfly effect is now better known in most of us as a tenet of chaos theory. In her new collection, *Beyond the Blue Mountain* (Viking, £14.99), Penelope Lively – doyenne of the British short story – plays with the idea in "The Butterfly and the Tin of Paint". A house painter, knocking over an open tin of Dulux gloss, eventually brings down the prime minister. Despite monsoons of misfortune, no one gets our sympathy. It is the best story in an amusing and accomplished volume. In most, however, there is no bigwig ripe for a fall. The tempest occurs in the teapot of an ordinary life. Indeed, a focus on low-fliers and their grey horizons is what connects all of the volumes under review.

The most ambitious is *The Selected Stories of Mavis Gallant* (Bloomsbury, £25), by the Canadian-born New Yorker writer who now lives in France. This major retrospective brings together over 40 years of artistic life. From the earliest story, dated 1953, to the most recent, 1995, the technique is enviable, and the insights sure. Gallant frequently peers into the anxious psyches of Anglo-Saxon visitors who are afraid they are missing the romance of the real Paris, where

the French have excellent dinners and ecstatic *tête-à-têtes* behind doors closed to naive foreigners. In some stories, we see the people in those barricaded houses, and begin to think that the French class system may be even more convoluted than our own.

Gallant's book is enormous in every sense, and the autobiographical preface, less how-to than credo, makes the point that, unlike novels, story collections should not be read in serial monogamy. "Read one. Shut the book. Read something else," advises Gallant. But almost every reader will want to come back to these, which show no signs of age.

Yet I do see a generational divide in these books. Lively and Gallant, the *émigrés grises*, tend to end their stories with an insight into how life is more complicated, more wonderful or bitter, than the protagonist had thought. Perhaps things can't be changed, but one is decent and will survive. Younger writers, bred on TV crime and spiralling real crime rates, go in for violent landscapes and emotions. Their endings often reveal that the protagonist is not as decent as he or she, or we, thought.

Take Kate Pullinger's "Willow", in *My Life as a Girl in a Men's Prison* (Phoenix House, £9.99). A happily-coupled middle-class lesbian writer who teaches women's studies to vio-



Pick of the week
The Selected Stories of
Mavis Gallant

lent men, discovers deeply incorrect emotions within. "May looked down at Clare's nakedness and found herself wondering if she could kill her, if she could murder the person she loved most... she fought back a surge of nausea, shocked to find it coupled with desire." Pullinger isn't afraid of looking at anything. These stories are deft, honest and compelling. In this second collection, the Canadian-born Londoner who wrote the novelisation of *The Piano* takes us into the bloodiest regions of bruised tender hearts. In the title story of Brady Udall's *Letting Loose the Hounds* (Cape, £9.99), a young American ne'er-do-

well and born victim who can't seem to control anything suddenly gets a chance at payback. As he consents to help a friend murder someone he has never met, he feels a spurt of purposeful energy, "a strange, hot thrill". Udall's control of language is remarkable, especially in one who seems to believe that violence maketh the man. He writes about people we wouldn't want to know except on paper. Raymond Carver's influence is visible, but Udall is his own man. He will be an interesting writer to watch. He is already an interesting one to read.

Sylvia Brownrigg's stories are good-natured, often joyous, and in the best sense sweet. They are full of bumptious heroines who choose life. Brownrigg is another American-born Londoner. *Ten Women who Shook the World* (Gollancz, £9), her first book, is too short: one wants more of these sexy, wild achievers. There is the "Amazon" who built the pyramids and other wonders of the world; and the "Hussie from the West": "I have been called promiscuous – your face has to pucker when you say it. I prefer to think of myself as an adventurer." At the rodeo and elsewhere, "I lasso, I corral. I ride 'em, they huck." When she falls off life, she gets back on.

She will ride anything – "hulls, horses, men, women, ideas." As Victor Hugo might have said, "Oh la la."

travel & outdoors

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Gone with the wind



When the levante blows, windsurfing goes ballistic, as Alex Sedgwick found at Spain's Tarifa beach

High in the coastal hills of southwestern Spain is a roadside bar that serves passable coffee and a nice slice of sea view. To the east, Gibraltar's grey mass rises from a sea of hazy blue like the jaws of a great whale; to the west, the pale jade shallows of the Atlantic deepen into an opulent cobalt. No wonder this area is called the Costa de la Luz – the Coast of Light: the shift from overexposed Mediterranean pastels to brilliant Atlantic clarity is so beautiful, it makes my heart thump.

But I am not here to admire the scenery; I am here to test my mettle at Tarifa, the notoriously gale-tossed windsurfing venue that lies hidden to the west of these hills. Throughout much of the summer a meteorological phenomenon known as the levante blows straight offshore there with freakish force, creating flat water conditions close to the beach which are ideal for speed-sailors, equipment testers and other professional lunatics whose day job is hurtling along a knife-edge of disaster at 50mph. And for average punters? Well, for us a levante is about as windsurfable as the blast from a Jumbo Jet during take-off.

As I sit drinking my coffee, I decide that far, far too much wind is the very kind this particular punter desires. The only thing worse than sailing at Tarifa would be not sailing there – and just to prove that, a VW van roars into the lay-by and pulls up inches from my table. The door opens with a rusty grunt and a huge bear-like thing descends stiffly from his seat. At his feet, a little pool of sand forms.

"Long trip?" I ask Sandy Bear, noting Berlin numberplates and half a dozen boards lashed to the roof of his van.

"Ja, maybe too long," he mumbles. He starts to massage his forehead with the raw, blistered palms of both paws. "Two days I was in Tarifa."

I blink, feeling a little confused, since I didn't know 6ft 5in Germans were so big on irony. "And all the time, levante," Sandy Bear sighs. "Ohhhh man, that's some real wind down there."

Like it? So impatient am I to experience the Real Thing for myself, I jump back into my car and drive off in a cloud of burnt rubber. All too soon, impatience turns to awe. According to my guidebook, once the hill road bottoms out I should be looking at six miles of the most gloriously pristine beach in Europe. Except that there is no beach. All I can see is where the beach used to be. In its place is a wind-whipped blur.

I have sailed gales. I have even sailed Hurricane Hugo's dying gasps. But I have never come across wind like this. Clumps of trees flap like flags on poles; fields of scrub and brush flatten as if hit by water cannon, and beyond the scrubland the mighty Atlantic finches as a thick mist of sand shrieks across its shallows.

Now I understand why so much of the Costa de la Luz remains unspoiled by general tourism. Only somebody truly desperate for a free exfoliant is going to lie around on a beach in a sandblasting semi-hurricane.

On the water, it is a different story. The coastline is a riot of colour as at least 200 windsurfers dart and dodge between each other like Paris taxi drivers jockeying around the Place de l'Etoile.

Fortunately, catching a ride here is far easier than in Paris: anybody wanting to rent equipment along the beach is spoilt for choice. But on a day as windy as this, choosing your launching spot is almost more important than choosing what type

back onshore just that little bit more realistic. At least I hope it does. Nothing how pale my complexion is when I walk into her office, the friendly Swiss manager at Surfbase Spinout draws my attention to a feature of the local conditions I might have overlooked.

"It's fine now," she says. "I nod. "How fine, would you guess?"

"Only force 8. Or 9. Or maybe..." Then she grins. It's the kind of crazed grin that faces into a sandblasting force 10 storm and says "party time". I'm having second thoughts about the wisdom of attending this particular party. But despite these misgivings I valiantly get kitted up.

Within seconds of stepping off dry land I am clinging to the boom by my fingertips like a man hanging on to a skyscraper ledge. And I am heading out to sea faster than is wise, or healthy, or indeed humanly possible. So just imagine my surprise when some Pamela Anderson clone rockets past me with a whoop and a pitying smile.

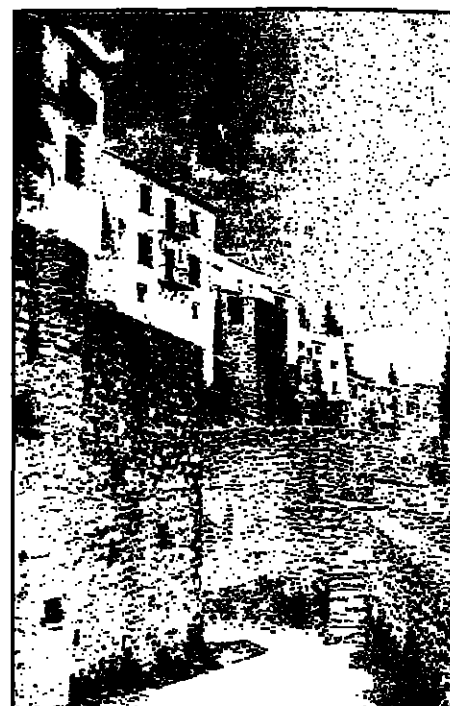
Scarcely giving me time to blink, she pilots her board skywards in a huge jump.

Perhaps the moment has come to get up, up and away myself? Not quite the way this Amazon of the air does, mind. Jumping off flat water, even in a hurricane, is for experts only. A much easier take-off method would be to head further out to where the sea has been whipped into huge ugly ramps. While Pilot Girl gybes, lights up the afterburners and accelerates back to shore, Punter Boy here maintains his course. Within seconds, the ocean changes from lawn-smooth green to an unprepossessing white. The sea is not just angry now, it's rabid. Limbs a-tremble, heart raging in my chest, I shut my eyes.

The board fires me up the face of a supersteep ramp like a stray Exocet missile in a skateboard park. Primed with the mighty expertise of just about every instructional article ever published in a windsurfing magazine, I am soon executing a picture-perfect How Not To

Jump jump. This is just the warm up. My next trick is to sail off and try a no-handed double forward loop. Yet I'm in heaven, or pretty high above the water at any rate. And as the warm wind embraces every bit of my body, I feel the thrill of riding beyond the edge of my abilities and fears, living the storm, joining as one with the sport of windsurfing at its hardcore heartland.

Then comes the landing. And with it, pain. A ton of pain. The pain in Spain falls mainly...



Over the top: hardcore windsurfing (left), while Tarifa (above) remains unspoilt

PHOTOGRAPHS: TONY STONE/ALAN SEDGWICK

GETTING THERE

The closest airport to Tarifa is Gibraltar, served from Gatwick and Manchester by British Airways (0345 222111), and from Luton by Monarch (01582 398333). From the airport, walk across the border to the Spanish town of La Linea. Buses run frequently from here to Algeciras, where you change for Tarifa; the total land journey should take an hour or so. Ferries on scheduled services to Gibraltar start at £167 (including tax) on Monarch; it may be cheaper to find a charter to Malaga and travel by road from there. You can rent a car in advance through companies like Avis (0950 900500), Europcar (0345 222525) or Hertz (0345 555888). Expect to pay about £130 a week for a small car such as an Opel Corsa.

ACCOMMODATION The Pension Correo (00 34 56 680206) in the centre of town is clean, central and £12 a night. Posher places overlook the beach; a double at Club Mistrat's Hurricane Hotel (00 34 56 680329) will set you back £45 to £125 a night, depending on the time of year.

EQUIPMENT HIRE Bic/Dos Mares (00 34 56 684035), Fanatic/Spinout (00 34 56 236352) and Mistrat/Hurricane (00 34 56 684919) are all on the beach. For the latest kit you pay about £30 a day, £225 a week.

TARIFA TARIFFS

EATING OUT For tapes, try El Pasillo, a friendly hole-in-the-wall bar on

Guzman El Bueno. Bar Sevilla on El Bravo may be the world's best chippie: mouthwatering mountains of prawns, squid and cod, all for a pittance. Meson Guzman El Bueno on Calle del Alcantarillo has a delightful outdoor patio and charges about £10 for dinner including drinks.

WIND In spring, force 3 to 6 westerlies (poniente). June to August is levante season: force 5 to 9, sometimes more. Bring your crash helmet.

EXCURSIONS Sixty-five miles to the north-east, the exquisite Moorish hilltop city of Ronda is worth an overnight stay at least. Or you could pop over to Morocco for the afternoon; ferries run from Tarifa in summer, and throughout the year from Algeciras.

PACKAGE TOURS If you want to stay in a hotel where you can eat, speak and sleep windsurfing, then contact Freedom Holidays (0181-741 4471) or Sportif (01273 844919).

MORE INFORMATION Spanish National Tourist Office, 57 St James' St, London SW1A 1LD (0171-499 0901; brochure-line 0891 669920).

There are two good things about the Monday morning EasyJet flight from Nice to Luton: the fare (I paid £155 return, compared with the lowest quote of £242 on British Midland), and the likelihood that EasyJet's owner, Stelios Haji-Ioannou, will be on board, flying back from his Monaco apartment. You find yourself agreeably positioned to pass on your views to the man who started the airline. You can't miss him – he is the large, genial gentleman who

walks the length of the plane, soliciting comments while trying hard to conceal his delight that every seat on his favourite flight is sold.

No need, apparently, for an expensive loyalty scheme like air miles; the only time EasyJet has tried that approach was in March, when full-fare passengers from Aberdeen were each given a bottle of whisky – with the strict instruction to save it for the office party if the company had bought the ticket.

A jolly jape from a jolly chap. But last Monday I got him talking about British Airways, and for a moment the smile abated.

Here's why. Since Mr Haji-Ioannou started EasyJet 19 months ago, the airline has built up something approaching a European network, with Luton airport at the hub. You can reach any of four airports in Scotland for £29, Amsterdam for £35 or Barcelona for £49. Or rather, you can't, because Air Passenger Duty is charged. By November, when it is due to double to £10 within Europe, tax will add 35 per cent to the cost of EasyJet's cheapest ticket – twice the rate of VAT.

"I'm sure British Airways had something to do with the decision to keep APD at a uniform level rather than going for a percentage. If the tax was levied at 5 per cent instead, then my passengers would pay about the same for a return journey as they do now. A Concorde passenger would have

to pay £250. So it suits BA to maintain the flat rate, penalising people travelling on cheaper flights."

A BA spokesman describes this as "a scurrilous accusation, without any foundation. The tax cannot be levied on a percentage basis because of EU regulations. BA is opposed totally to the tax, and to say we had an influence over the Chancellor's decision is just plain wrong."



Simon Calder

BA's rebranding is costing the airline £60m, compared with about 60 pence for EasyJet's corporate image

Meanwhile, BA's attention has been focused on the relaunch of its corporate image. The rebranding exercise is costing the airline £60m, compared with about 60 pence for EasyJet's image: it simply involves painting planes with the airline's phone number in large, bright orange figures.

The next new EasyJet destination is Geneva, starting in November. But why hasn't Mr Haji-Ioannou

started flights to Berlin? In the absence of low-cost air services, the only budget options are to hitch there from Rotterdam or jump from one of the cheap Polish buses that bowl past Berlin en route to Warsaw. But EasyJet says "nein" – too few Germans have credit cards, an essential for an airline that sells only direct.

What about EasyJet taking its no-frills approach across the North Atlantic to the land where credit cards are mandatory, would Mr Haji-Ioannou follow the no-frills idea first adopted by Freddie Laker, where you had to queue up for three days for a standby ticket? Or the example of PeopleExpress, which flew from Gatwick to New York in the 1980s and charged extra for baggage? "No chance. The economics just don't add up. I have an agreement with Phil Condit, who runs Boeing. If I ever go to his office and ask him for a 747, he'll throw me out."

A fun flight, then, in contrast with my awkward outbound trip – a journey that amused only the taxi drivers on the Riviera. My destination was beyond St Raphael, 90 miles along the coast from Nice. But the EasyJet evening flight arrived late and I missed the last train. "How much," I asked the drivers, "would a taxi cost?"

Eventually the laughter subsided sufficiently for me to learn that the non-negotiable fare was 1,500 francs – about £165. I found a cheap hotel room and continued next morning, a bit poorer but much wiser.

Also on Monday, I enjoyed my best airline meal for a long time: fresh bread, tasty cheese and tangy tomatoes with more flavour in a single pip than the ones at my supermarket. This was a picnic I assembled at Nice market because EasyJet offers no in-flight meals. Occasionally, no frills are better than some.

WORLD COVER

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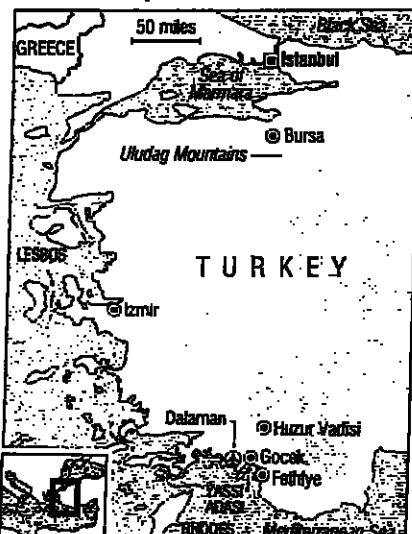


Rose Hov
hip to the
challenge
belly dance
course in

Further on were the grounds of the Muradiye Kulliyesi, begun in 1424 by Murat II, the sixth ruler of the Ottoman Empire, and continued by a further nine sultans who had their burial places there most of them meeting unnatural and untimely deaths (only Murat II of the Ottoman sultans died in his bed). Rising on the ground like beehives, there was certain chill about the sarcophagi which ranged in decoration from grey austere to tiled extravagance.

A map showing the location of Bursa and the Uludağ Mountains. Bursa is marked with a circle and labeled 'Bursa'. The Uludağ Mountains are indicated by a line and labeled 'Uludağ Mountains'. The map also shows the Sea of Marmara to the north and the city of Istanbul to the northeast.

But then Bursa seems more than surreal. At Yesil Cami a young man, tall and thin, wearing a green, woolly hat and raincoat, flashed me a smile as I stood admiring the tiles inside the main entrance. He joined the lines of men kneeling in prayer and fidgeted like mad. Then, when I left, he passed me again. "Where you from? Ohh, England!" With that, he said goodbye and got into the back of a waiting white car.



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Rose Rouse was hip to the challenge of a belly dancing course in Turkey

Navel manoeuvres

Architect of the belly: Karine Butchart, course teacher, in a diaphanous swirl

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN LAWRENCE

What sort of person chooses to go on a belly dancing course? Especially the "Middle Eastern dance course, including Egyptian warrior-woman stick dances" that I saw advertised. It was taking place at an alternative holiday centre in a beautiful valley in south-west Turkey.

My question was answered at Dalaman airport. At first I spotted only one likely candidate among the dozens of casually clad, fag-wielding holiday-makers. Richmal certainly looked the part (it was her Armenian blood that did it). A PA to an estate agent in Dorset, she also seemed to be a belly dancing expert, and talked volubly about coin belts and where to get them, then related strange tales of Bedouin evenings in Blandford Forum, and explained how she once almost strangled herself performing a veil dance at a friend's party.

The others were an incongruous bunch. Belinda, a business analyst from Somerset, had been belly dancing for four years ("it gives me an excuse to wear all the clothes I'd never dare wear otherwise"). She told hilarious tales about her local lascivious Turkish restaurant owner called Herman. Then there was Fatima, a retired nurse, and her niece Soraya, a theatre set designer, and Joanna, a social worker from London. They, like me, were all belly dancing neophytes.

As the minibus sped southwards, passing gorgeous pine forests and rural vignettes of young Turkish women tending their goats, it became apparent that the British belly dancing sor-

ity was divided into the tassel twirlers (glitzy, cabaret, with at least a hint of tackiness) and the non-tassel brigade (earthy, taking belly-dancing back to its feminine roots, fun). Belinda informed me that Karine, our teacher who I had yet to meet, was "definitely a non-tassel person." Richmal, on the other hand, had distinct tassel tendencies.

It was dark by the time we arrived at Huzur Vadisi ("peaceful valley"), an hour's drive from Dalaman and 30 minutes inland on an unmade road from the eastern town of Gökcek. It is obviously a very special place. Tanfer and Jane Taka, together with Jane's brother Ian Worrall, bought the three-acre site three years ago when it had only olive trees and poppies on it. It now has six round yurts (traditional nomadic tents), a kosk (an exotic treehouse on stilts where you eat, lounge around and socialise), and a stone-clad swimming pool.

Jane herself came up with the idea for a holistic holiday centre. Yet it was her husband Tanfer and her brother Ian, an eco-engineer who had helped set up an alternative energy project in Ladakh, who actually put the plan into action. They have constructed everything themselves. Aided by a local group of young lads, their building plan was based on respect for traditional Turkish culture, including yurts. After a wild fact-finding mission - on the back of Ian's motorbike - they decided their yurt's wooden poles needed hand-stripping and steaming. Creating the centre has truly been a labour of love.

The first morning we gathered at a special stage area in the middle of a sunny wheat field surrounded by olive trees and pine-covered hills. We were dressed in sarongs with colourful scarves deliberately accentuating our hips. Most of us, that is. Of course, Richmal was professionally attired, including the shimmering coin belt across her bum. Karine Butchart, our tasselless teacher from Bristol, explained that "it was the grace, sensuality, strength and inner feminine power" that attracted her to belly dancing, while reminding us "that originally belly dancing was done by women for women, it was partly about strengthening the whole pelvic area ready for childbirth. Only later did it become bastardised into a dance to please men".

Hip-circling amid a gentle breeze and to the enticing sound of Egyptian baladi music, we swayed slowly, and gradually got used to a new vocabulary. Hip drops (letting your bottom drop suddenly), hip hits (pushing your hips violently out to the side), camel walks (which turned out to be Belinda's speciality) and vertical figures of eight were to become a part of our daily routine. "I just start to get that womanly feeling in my belly when it fades away," waxed Fatima whimsically.

Fortunately Karine was not a stickler for technique and did not insist that we perfect the crab walk or the diagonal vertical eight. She was more interested in the spirit of the dance. By day three, I was wearing my Indian table cloth and wielding a wooden stick in my own particular warrior-woman rendition of the Egyptian stick dance. It

was a liberating experience. "Think of the pride of bearing that stick," said Karine. "Think of yourself as a tree." And somehow, I had no problem at all.

In between dancing - two hours in the morning and an hour in the evening - we visited a belly-dancing shop in Fethiye (guess who bought a sparkling black-and-silver beaded number? Yes, Richmal - but she did look fantastic), took a boat trip to the island of Yassi Adasi, during which we not only saw a flock of iridescent blue-and-brown bee-eaters but also burst into spontaneous belly-dancing action (much to the amusement of the Turkish staff), ate tasty vegetarian meals at Huzur Vadisi and went for long, wandering walks.

By Saturday, our last day, we were exploring techniques of classical belly dancing and playing with diaphanous veils. It was bliss.

And then there was the party. Nick, Karine's partner, managed to turn the stage into the Huzur Vadisi version of a harem and we put on a performance: me, like a whirling dervish, Belinda like a very funky disco dancer, Soraya and Fatima like gentle, pop versions, Richmal like a sensuous, slow classical belly dancer and finally Karine as our floating, folksy, stick-rotating star performer.

It was a very playful night. Hips a-go-go, shimmying bottoms, flirtatious veil dancing, sexy hip circling - it all happened. But my favourite moment was seeing Tanfer's mum, a normally taciturn Turkish lady, sporting my bright-orange feather boa and an occasional smile.

TURKEY SURVIVAL GUIDE

GETTING THERE Frequent scheduled flights link London Heathrow and Manchester with Istanbul. Specimen prices: Capital Flights (0171-209 4000) is selling return tickets from Manchester on 1 July with Turkish Airlines for £219, and from Heathrow on British Airways for £174.

For destinations beyond Istanbul, it is worth checking direct with Turkish Airlines (0171-499 4499); a flight via Istanbul to Adana costs £290 for departures in early July.

Charter flights are widely available to destinations around the coast of Turkey, particularly Antalya, Dalaman and the new airport at Bodrum. Check for late deals with a High Street travel agent, or look at the advertisements on ITV Teletext. You can expect to pay about £180 return (including tax), though cheaper last-minute bargains may be available.

Cut-price Istanbul city breaks will be offered once again this winter by SunTours (0171-434 2636). Weekend departures begin on 7 November, and cost £156 for three nights in a three-star hotel, including flights from Gatwick and tax.

GETTING IN Because Britain levies a fee on Turkish visitors to the UK, British tourists have to pay £10 on arrival for a visa.

MONEY Do not change money in advance. The Turkish lira, currently at 230,000 to the pound, depreciates rapidly against sterling, and exchange rates in the UK rarely keep pace with the fall in value. It is a much better plan to wait until you arrive in Turkey, and then to change small amounts. Banks keep short hours. If you can't find one open, souvenir shops or hotels will give you reasonably competitive rates.

GETTING AROUND Domestic flights on THY are relatively cheap (about £35 for the Istanbul-Ankara hop, for example), but the main mode of transport is the express bus. These are huge, air-conditioned conveyances with an on-board courier who dispenses free soft drinks and eau de cologne to passengers. On main routes, buses run frequently - at least every 15 minutes on the six-hour trip between Istanbul and Ankara. Services are run by numerous competing companies, and at some of Turkey's livelier bus stations it is easy to be hijacked by a tout who steers you towards a particular operator; shrug off all offers of "help" and check all the ticket offices yourself before buying a ticket. Fares on long-distance runs tend to be about £1 per 100km (60 miles).

Shorter trips are operated by minibuses, generally in ramshackle condition. The name for this type of vehicle is dolmus, meaning "stuffed", which also applies to collective taxis - generally a stretched Mercedes that can take seven passengers on a good day.

Car hire is easy and relatively cheap, but be warned that the roads in Turkey are dangerous.

Rail travel has all but died out in the face of competition from buses, but services on the main line east from Istanbul to Ankara and beyond have survived. See the Thomas Cook Overseas Timetable for details; this line is not included in the European Timetable.

ACCOMMODATION There are two basic options: hotels, which are cheap, and pansiyons, which are cheaper. Turkey seems to have an over-supply of accommodation, so you need not book in advance. One exception is Istanbul, where many travellers prefer to have a room reserved in order to minimise hassle on arrival.

In Istanbul, a room in a comfortable but not overly luxurious hotel will cost about £15 for a single, £25 double; elsewhere, you can expect to pay about half as much. Pansiyons charge about £3 per person per night.

LANGUAGE Few British visitors master Turkish successfully; if you want to have a go, a useful introduction is the BBC's *Get By in Turkish* book/audio pack. The most widely spoken foreign language is German, but many locals speak a smattering of English.

BELLY DANCING Rose Rouse paid £295 for her one-week course at Huzur Vadisi. This included transfers, instruction and full board, and was based on three people sharing a yurt. Flights are extra. Further details from Huzur Vadisi, 64 Cornerswell Road, Penarth, South Glamorgan CF642WA (01222-704380). The same company arranges courses in activities ranging from pottery to tai chi.

Karine Butchart, who teaches Middle Eastern dancing in Britain, can be contacted on 0117-963 5967.

MAPS AND INFORMATION The Turkish tourist office in the UK is on the First Floor, Egyptian House, Piccadilly, London W1V 9DD (0171-629 7771). The brochure request line, for maps and other published information, is 0891 887755; calls cost 50p per minute.

Strip off and revisit the age of steam

A century ago affluent Victorians annually migrated to the spa town of Harrogate for an efficacious cure. As many as 15,000 came each summer - including the aristocracy, Indian maharajahs and several crowned heads of Europe.

Harrogate may be better known today for Betty's tea rooms or as a conference venue, but it deserves to be famous for its Turkish baths alone, one of the few relics of its heyday as a spa town. Designed by the architects Baggeley and Bristowe, the lavish baths cost the staggering sum of £118,000. Yet there is no clue from the street of the exotic interior behind the solid late-Victorian facade. The moment you step over the threshold from the rather ordinary reception area into the Turkish baths themselves, the outside world seems as remote as the moon.

You come to the rest-room first, and it sets the tone of the place. It is long and lofty, articulated by a series of Islamic-style arches resting on elaborately decorated columns. Slatted reclining chairs with white covers line the walls on either side. The view of the plunge pool at one end is framed by a wooden screen adorned with Turkish crescents and surmounted by a clock. Crescents also decorate the carved surround of the central cupola. Nothing but the unfortunate addition of potted plants in white plastic containers seems to have changed since the day the baths were opened by the Duke of Cambridge in 1897.

The procedure - and etiquette -

Amicia de Moubray enjoys that tingly feeling at Harrogate's Turkish Baths



Mellow talk relaxing in a hot-room

PHOTOGRAPH: JOAN RUSSELL/GUZELIAN

here is fairly straightforward. After undressing in a mahogany cubicle hung with a red plush curtain, a shower is de rigueur. Bashful ladies wear swimming costumes, but to appreciate the experience fully you really need to be naked. If you are able to book ahead, I recommend beginning with a massage

before embarking on the rituals of a Turkish bath proper.

A shower is followed by 15 to 20 minutes in the steam. The high humidity infused with eucalyptus oil gently cleans the skin and eases tense muscles. The walls of the steam-room are glazed brickwork and it is lined with splendid

marble seats which slowly reveal their glory as your eyes become accustomed to the water vapour.

The next stage is a bracing dip in the plunge pool. It is perishingly cold, but if you are brave enough, swim a couple of lengths (about eight breast strokes). The tingling sensation is marvellously invigorating.

You then work your way up through the three hot-rooms (each at a different temperature), taking icy plunges whenever it suits. All the hot-rooms are lined with vibrantly glazed brickwork and have generous marble slabs on which to lie. There is a powerful sensation of calm and timelessness here. All is still and quiet save for the odd shriek as a fellow bather descends into the plunge pool. Instinctively you talk in hushed tones - and it would be unthinkable to roar with laughter. Finally, you spend at least 20 minutes cooling down in the glorious rest-room.

After the recommended two-and-a-half hours in the Baths I emerged feeling blissfully relaxed. There was just time to pop into Betty's nearby for a delicious hot chocolate before I caught the train home.

The Turkish Sauna Suite, Royal Baths Assembly Rooms, Crescent Road, Harrogate, Yorkshire (01423 562498). Opening times are many and varied. There are ladies', men's and mixed sessions. Admission £7.50. Other services offered include massage, reflexology, leg waxing and facials.

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Revamped recreational

Dracula's old hunting ground has become a walk on Whitby's wild side. Matthew Brace goes coasting

The cliff path from Whitby to Robin Hood's Bay in North Yorkshire follows one of Britain's most exhilarating stretches of coastline. Start at Whitby's small bridge across the harbour and leave the town by the 199 steps of Church Stairs to St Mary's church, made famous by Bram Stoker in his novel *Dracula*. But a sunny summer morning is unlikely to yield a close encounter with the vampire emerging from his grave in the churchyard next to the ruined abbey; you are far more likely to be terrified by swarms of children dribbling ice-cream and shouting at their parents.

Leave the tourist throngs and the view over the harbour and head down the east side of the abbey, past a new car park. Pass a farm on the right with a large and keen-eyed rottweiler - barked at, I'm glad to add - and take the first side road on the left, which will bring you to the coast by Whitby lighthouse.

Here you will join the Cleveland Way, one of Britain's 12 National Trails. It is a 5-mile route running through the Cleveland Hills, across the northern rim of the North York Moors and down the coast to Scarborough.

The path south from here follows six miles of breathtaking scenery. The cliffs

have been contorted by thousands of years of geological pressure and are home to numerous colonies of seabirds. From the relative safety of the cliff-top, you can see the North Sea raging a few hundred feet below. The path passes along the very edge of the cliffs, so be careful - especially in high winds, which are common. Coastal erosion has taken its toll and some stiles are perilously close to tumbling over the edge.

As this is a short walk, no more than eight miles in total, take your time and stop frequently to admire the view. And what a view. On days of busy weather in mid-summer the storm clouds race out from the shore, the sun breaking through to spotlight patches of sea. The fishing smacks bobbing a few hundred yards offshore look impossibly small from here. If the winds are blowing on shore and the weather turns nasty, you will find some shelter behind isolated bushes bent double by years of storms.

Follow the path skirting high above inlets and beaches until you round the headland at Ness Point, where the snug fishing village of Robin Hood's Bay comes into view. Its huddled red roofs look out-of-place along this wild coast - and inviting.

The route will take you slightly inland

before ending by the car park above the town. Take the steep road down among the houses. Pass the cosy Laurel pub (or drop in - the bitter is comforting and the atmosphere warm), and continue to the Bay Hotel, teetering above the boats moored by the waved-washed slipway. Here you can tuck into fresh scampi and chips and a well-deserved pint.

Then, if you are heading back to Whitby, take a deep breath and climb out of the village to meet your bus. They run hourly and take 25 minutes, but check the timetable before leaving Whitby (Tees and District Transport, 01947 602146).

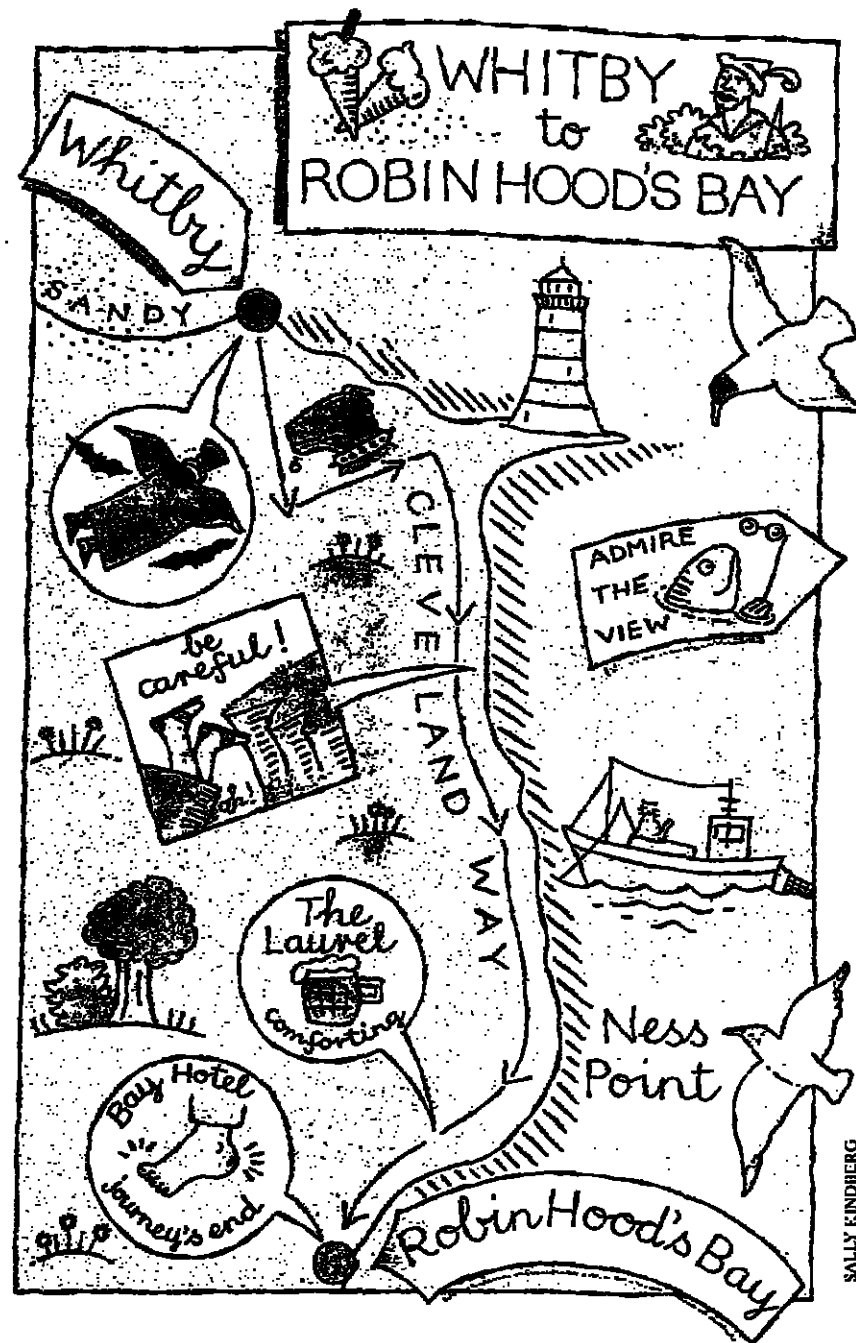
If you are staying in Robin Hood's Bay, the Bay Hotel is a great place to rest tired feet. It is journey's end for sunburnt walkers on the Coast-to-Coast route who have crossed from Cumbria, and the victorious long-distance walkers will no doubt be all too pleased to delight you with tales of derring-do and describe in detail the state of their blisters.

Try to book the popular room above the bar. It is fairly noisy until after closing time but worth it to be lulled to sleep by the sound of the North Sea crashing below, and dream of the colonies of birds back up the coast doing the same.

Directions

- Cross the small bridge over the harbour in Whitby
- Leave the town by following signs to the Abbey
- Follow the minor road south and turn left to the lighthouse on the cliff
- Join the Cleveland Way coast path
- Follow the path all the way down to Ness Point
- From the car park, take the road into Robin Hood's Bay
- The Laurel is on your left, just over half way down. The Bay Hotel is at the water's edge

OS map Landranger 94 (Whitby and Surrounding Area)



Wildlife clings close to the ground on Skomer Island. Guillemots are crammed tightly on to the narrow rock ledges. Flowers hug the earth in a thick carpet of colour. There was only ever one tree on the island - a Black Poplar - and that died in 1994. Desiccating winds of sea spray and a unforgiving Celtic mist make Skomer an experience so wild that only the fittest stand the test of time.

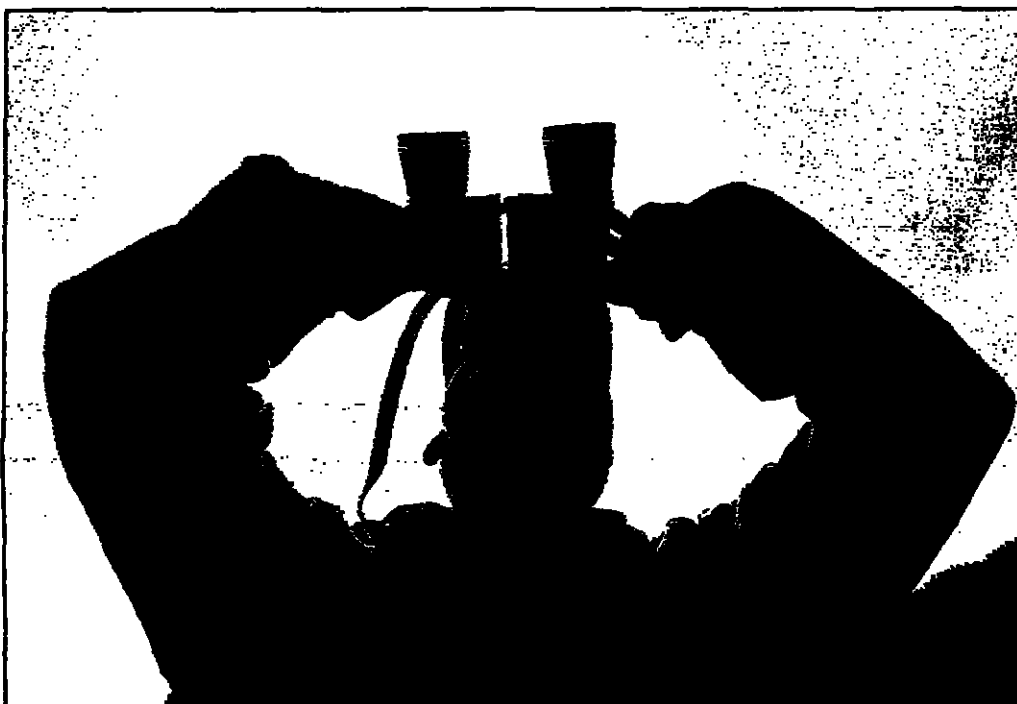
Man has dabbled in colonising the island: Iron Age settlers founded a community on the 720-acre Pembrokeshire island, and archaeological remains bear testimony to their ancient lifestyle. From as early as the 7th century the island was farmed, but that came to an end some 40 years ago and the slate-fronted farm buildings quickly fell into disrepair, helped on their way by the winter storms.

Yet nature has made a better job of taming the island. Skomer is a vibrant and magical place with an enviable diversity of fauna and a gentle plateau of spectacular flowers, ranging from the whites and pinks of sea campion and thrift on the cliffs to the purple heathers and yellow ragwort farther inland. Birds and beasts which flourish in the prevailing winds burrow into the island while the flora knits a tight blanket against wanton weather.

Indeed, nature has colonised the island for itself. During the breeding season, from Easter to August, Skomer can boast almost half a million seabirds, including 6,500 pairs of puffins, 10,000 guillemots, 3,000 razorbills, 2,500 kittiwake pairs and 40 per cent of the world's population of Manx shearwaters. Rabbits are in abundance, as is the unique Skomer vole. Harbour porpoises and common dolphins can be seen most months of the year.

Visitors are welcomed to the island but should not expect special treatment. This is nature in the raw: there are public toilets, but they are only in use while there is adequate water available. At the best of times you are asked only to flush the chain if absolutely necessary. A network of sign-posted paths enables visitors to explore the island, but you are advised not to stray from the paths: the ground is so densely burrowed with wildlife that the Dyfed Wildlife Trust, which manages the island, fears that straying feet could damage the diverse fauna.

The Celtic island tamed by Nature



Man gave up trying to farm Skomer, off the Pembrokeshire coast, but the puffins and rabbits have thrived, writes Nicola Swanborough

The visitors
Eva John, a teacher from Pembrokeshire, spent the day at Skomer with her husband, Mark, and three children, Ellen, 11, Joe, 9, and Lily, 6.

Eva
The charm of Skomer is that it offers the chance of escape - you can really get away from it all. To sit on the island and just listen to the wind and wildlife without the background noise of traffic is so relaxing.

Mark and I stayed on the island as voluntary wardens some years ago, and the nice thing about it is that the facilities are still as basic now as they were then. It hasn't been upgraded to meet the demands of visitors, everything is low-key, the island is allowed to speak for itself.

May and June are probably the best times to go. The island is awash with colour. There is a real abundance of wildlife and it pays to be forearmed with a bit of knowledge about the seabirds that migrate to the island. The puffins are easy for the

children to spot, but there are some quite rare birds, too. We were lucky enough to see a short-eared owl.

Ellen
It only takes about 10 or 12 minutes to get to Skomer on the boat and there's lots to see when you get there. We spotted puffins, razorbills, guillemots and lots of rabbits. We saw three little black ones as well as the common grey rabbits. The seals were interesting to watch: it was really easy to see them swimming around and lying on the rocks.

In the middle of the island is the old farm, and there is an information centre there. There is a video camera link to a Manx shearwater nest, where you can see the bird sitting on its eggs: as Manx shearwaters tend to fly at night it is a good opportunity to see one during the day.

There is a lot of walking to do on Skomer so your feet get quite tired, but it's worth it for all the animals and flowers you see.

Joe
I didn't get at all tired walking around Skomer. I like walking, especially when there is plenty to see, and the island is really interesting. You can get really close to the puffins: at one point they were only about two metres away. There were millions of them. Some of them were floating on the sea while others were on rocks. We took lots of photos of them. We saw a lot of seals too, I think about 15. You could sit and have your picnic and watch them swimming down below in the sea. There was quite a lot of information about the birds and wildlife at the information centre, which was very helpful.

Lily
I really enjoyed being on an island and going on a boat. It was a little bit misty at first, but it soon cleared and we saw lots of puffins. There was a lot of walking to do, but we sat down for our picnic.

The deal
Location: Skomer Island is off the Pembrokeshire coast. The boat leaves Martinshaven every day apart from Monday (but open Bank Holiday Mondays) between 1 April and 31 October. Departures are at 10am, 11am, and 12 noon (weather permitting) and return trips begin at 3pm.

Price: return boat fare £6 adults, £4 children. Additional landing fee of £6 for adults, £2 students with card, children free. Details: Dyfed Wildlife Trust (01437 765462).

Accommodation: two small chalets offer very basic accommodation for those wishing to stay, but you must book first. Call above number.

Facilities: toilets, but no refreshments. Information centre and resident warden for guidance and first aid. There is little shelter. If it rains, you get wet.

Wildlife in close-up: up to half a million sea birds flock to Skomer in the breeding season
PHOTOGRAPHS: PHIL REES/DRAGON NEWS

Pit stop

After the trip to Skomer head north along the Pembrokeshire coast from Martinshaven to St David's, where there are two pleasant hotels.

St Nul's Hotel (01437 720239) is named appropriately after the mother of St David. It is a friendly family hotel half a mile from the town centre and offers some of the best children's terms around: under-fives stay free, in their parents' room and breakfast and high tea for them is free. Other bonuses include a ground-floor bedrooms for the less mobile, and free golf at the St David's nine-hole course. Charges for bed and breakfast per person per night vary according to time of year and is currently £42.

Warhol Court (01437 720300), bordering National Trust park land, has spectacular views over St David's Bay to islands beyond. Equally eye-catching within the Ada Williams collection of ornamental and ornate hand-painted tiles in the public areas and some bedrooms. Children under 14 stay free in their parents' room and there is a playground. Free golf: the St David's course. Bed and breakfast starts at £60 per person.

From *Egon Ronay's guide*... and children come too. (£9.99)

Trouble spots

South Africa: "We were both aware of the potential instability and dangers of the new South Africa. We strictly observed all the usual travellers rules of not wearing jewellery, dressing down and sticking to busy and well lit streets. In spite of all of this we were mugged within one hour of arriving in Johannesburg.

The airport shuttle bus to town dropped us at the station and we asked a station security guard if it was safe to make the 100 metre walk from there to the offices of a bus company. He said yes and we headed off. Within seconds nine youths split us up and insisted we hand over our bags. They were all armed with hunting knives. I immediately surrendered my bag but my partner's instinct was to try and hold onto his belongings and he fought with them, eventu-

ally wrestling the bag from the attacker.

Although people were around, no one tried to help and it was only when I started screaming that the assailants fled. They escaped with both our air and rail tickets, my passport, all my travellers' cheques, credit cards and money.



something to declare

We reported the incident to the police - a depressing experience as an ancient caravan under the rail arches which contained nothing more than a naked light-bulb and chair. The officers

Bargain of the week

The world's busiest airport has just become busier, with the introduction of Air India's twice-weekly flights between London and Chicago. Its Boeing 747-400s fly twice a week from Heathrow to O'Hare airport. A quick, cheap weekend in Chicago

becomes possible, with a noon departure on Friday arriving at 2.30pm in Chicago and a 9.30pm flight back on Sunday night getting to London just after 11 on Monday morning.

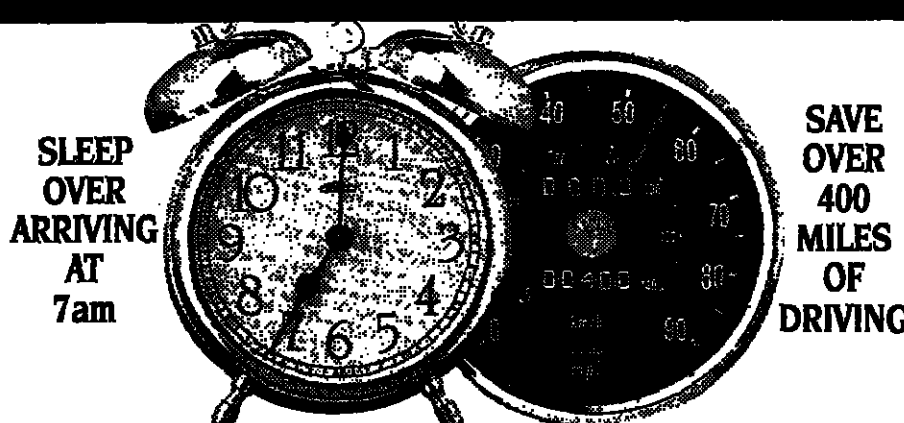
Discount tickets are available for travel in June through Air India consolidators. Trailfinders (0171-937 5400) is offering

a special of £275 including tax; you can return after a weekend, a week or a year. Air India now offers free drinks in all classes, but if you want more legroom, the business class fare is £792 through Welcom Travel (0171-439 3627). By the way, O'Hare - not Heathrow - is the world's busiest airport.

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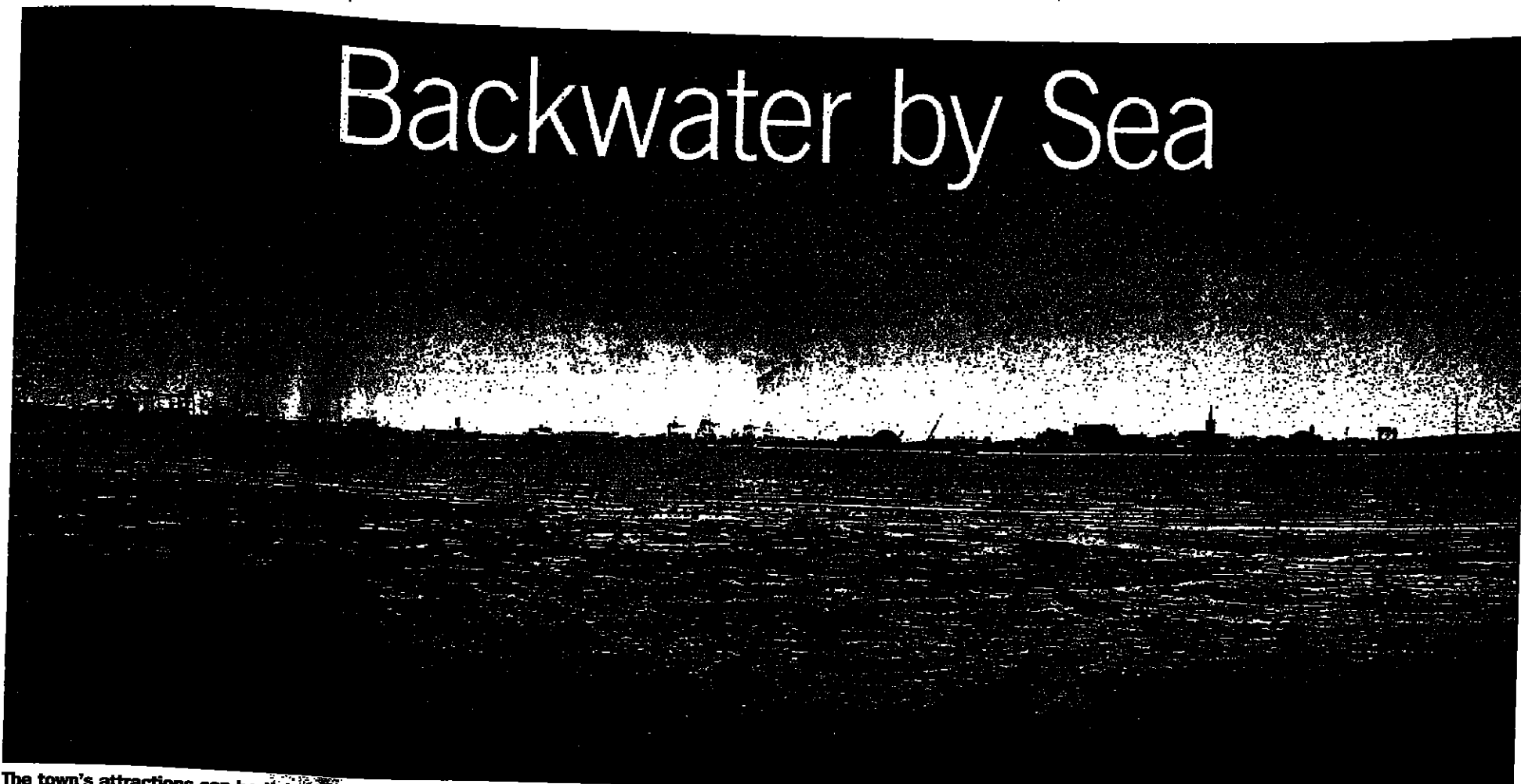


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Backwater by Sea



The town's attractions can be ticked off in a morning, but unless a chilling easterly is whipping in off the North Sea, Harwich rewards a longer stay PHOTOGRAPH: BRIAN HARRIS

Two historic North Sea ports became linked this week – by a new long-distance bicycle route. Harwich and Hull are connected by the 163-mile Sustrans track. But if you don't fancy cycling, there's plenty to see at either end. Simon Calder recommends a blustery day in Essex, while Rob Ainsley makes a call to the last traditional phone booth in Britain

Whether you approach by sea, road or rail, your first sight of the mouth of the River Stour – on which Harwich perches – is a festoon of ungainly and unsightly cranes. Fortunately for the traveller, but possibly regrettably for the town, they belong either to Felixstowe – across the Estuary – or Parkeston Quay, buried a couple of miles west. Harwich is a tidy, beguiling port precisely because most of its maritime might has moved elsewhere. Twenty-one years ago this week, the navy left the port to its own devices, taking with it the rest of the 20th century.

The feeling of a town marooned persists when you wander around its quiet, handsome streets. A stern,

redbrick bank has drifted to seed as an antique shop, while the Electric Palace cinema has been preserved perfectly since it opened in 1911. Only the advertised admission of a shilling has changed – but not by too much. If you go tomorrow, National Cinema Day, to either of the showings of *The English Patient*, you will pay only £1.

A ticker-off of sights could survey the town's attractions in a morning and still have a couple of hours left for a bit of ferry-spotting. But unless a chilling easterly is whipping in off the North Sea, Harwich rewards a longer stay. A modest arc of a beach is washed (or, in high winds, battered) by the murky estuary water. In contrast to the bright primary colours applied to a cheery row of beach huts.

Alongside, decked along a broad lawn, are the town's three gems.

The High Lighthouse and the Low Lighthouse are a non-matching pair. For centuries, they and their predecessors guided mariners to the safety of the port. The idea was that when the two were lined up, they showed the precise course to steer to reach the harbour safely – hence they were known as leading lights. But, as the estuary silted up, they could no longer be relied upon and became known as the misleading lights.

The last-but-one Low Lighthouse features in work by Constable, who spent productive summers a few miles upstream at Flatford Mill. The present version houses a (necessarily) small maritime museum. Its High sibling remains a landmark for mariners, and

now, additionally, for hikers: a plaque proclaims "Here ends the Essex Way, 81 footpath miles from Epping".

The strangest sight in Harwich also involves walking. The treadwheel crane, planted in the middle of the lawn, is a large, time-blackened shed from which a gantry protrudes in a gallows-like manner. Inside, a human-sized drum like a watermill wheel allowed two men to plod endlessly around to raise cargo from moored vessels.

Halfpenny Pier, whose name reveals the tolls charged, is a peeling, but appealing, incursion into the estuary. A few fishing vessels bob about in the swell, but your eye is caught by a strange creature on the horizon: the *Stena Discovery*, a giant catamaran that began sailing to Holland 12 days

ago. She is moored at Parkeston Quay, where the fortunes of the town moved more than a century ago. It was named after the chairman of the Great Eastern Railway Company, Mr Charles Parkes, who decided to move ferry operations there in 1883. Now the quay has acquired the much more dynamic title of Harwich International. The change distances the port still further from merely municipal Harwich, the town at the end of Essex – and England.

SC

Tourist information: Parkeston Quay 01255 506139; Electric Cinema: King's Quay Street 01255 553333; Recommended reading: *Shire County Guide* – Essex, by Stan Jarvis (£5.99)

Hull Tourist Information 01482 223559

Better than a desert island

Robinson Crusoe made a big mistake. In September 1651 he couldn't wait to leave Hull, and look what happened to him. "Had I the sense to return to Hull, I'd have been happy," he said.

North Sea Ferries make the outward journey easier these days, at least. Belgium and Holland are just over the water: dinner in Hull, breakfast in Ghent, supper in the North Sea. Literally, if it's a choppy crossing.

Crusoe should have stayed longer. Hull isn't Paris or Prague, it's true. It's not even really Hull any more: the town's traditional lifeblood, the fishing industry, started its slow decline in the 1970s, and the Cod Wars didn't help. (Hull is twinned with Reykjavik).

Hull, which celebrates its centenary this year, is a big industrial city with enough curiosities to keep the visitor from rushing off to a desert island right away. The River Hull, striking north from the Humber through the city, is still lined with boats, and Hull remains a major port, though nowadays you're as likely to meet people working in chemicals (BP has a huge processing plant nearby) as trawler crews. However, fish are still a feature of Hull life – in a sense. A walk through the old town takes you past an A-to-Z of fish plaques, set in the pavement. Stroll round the old docks, have a drink in the Black Boy or atmospheric old White Hart, and collect the set from Anchovy to Zander (via Quid, X-ray fish and Yawling). And look out for the jokes: a catfish is being chased by a dogfish, an electric eel swims outside a Yorkshire Electricity substation, outside the old monastery is a monkfish, red herrings nearly lead you off the trail, and outside a bank, sure enough, is a shark.

Listen out for the local accent. Despite it being in Yorkshire (since May 1996: previously it was in the now abolished Humberside), there's no "Ee-bah-gum" here; locals speak with flat "O" sounds, as their Danish ancestors did. So Hullensians pay "Pearl" Tax and call people on the "fern". In fact, uniquely in Britain, Hull runs its own "fern" system. As used to be the case throughout Britain, the duration of local calls is unlimited – no scrabbling for change in the phone boxes which are not red but white.

Phone-box-spotters take note: in the Market Hall, you can see a K1 – one of a surviving handful of Britain's very first. And when Hull phones switched over to digit a few years ago, they gave the old equipment to Freetown in Sierra Leone. (Because anti-slavery man William Wilberforce is a Hull alumnus, it's also twinned with Freetown.) It's an intriguing thought that somewhere in Sierra Leone is our family's old 1960s bakelite phone with that orangecolour stain on the dial. If Crusoe made it back from his desert island, he would recognise little of the port he knew. World War II saw to that: Hull proved a handy dumping-ground for German bombs. But he'd soon settle into a pub in the old town, and get chatting to some of the former workers from the docks. They'd put some more "curl" on the fire, drink a "terst", and talk about life on the fishing "berts".

RA

NEXT WEEK IN



THE INDEPENDENT

MONDAY

KEITH ALLEN

He is a comedian, actor, marauding Soho-ite, well known as a nasty bit of work. But even that does not quite explain why he ran naked on to the stage when Max Bygraves was performing, why he has five children by four different women and why he was such a lousy cat burglar. He tried to tell Deborah Ross

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IAN MCGEECHAN

The coach of the British Lions talks to Chris Hewett about the tactical battle his team will face in the First Test against South Africa next weekend



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If you think there's no accounting for taste

... you'd be surprised when it comes to growing some of the 126 varieties of tomato on offer. By Anna Pavord



Meaty: big beef tomatoes are slow to mature but full of flavour

I have been defrosting the freezer. It is an antediluvian model – the kind with a black flip-top lid which the village newsagent used to keep his ice-cream in. You could fall into its icy, cavernous bottom and never be seen again. I hate the job, but freezers are like filing cabinets. The system only holds up if the person who puts stuff in is the same person who pulls it out.

Buried at the bottom among the stray gooseberries and escaped broad beans were five bags of tomatoes, the remnants of last year's harvest. I froze 60lbs of tomatoes last year, and hope to do the same again this season. They freeze brilliantly if you bag them up whole and unskinned. Then they don't stick together and you can fish out whatever quantity you want. If you run a frozen tomato under the cold tap, the skin peels away like silk.

We grow all ours outside. Often, you can risk setting plants out at the beginning of May. This year, May having been so treacherously cold and windy, we delayed, so we won't be picking tomatoes at the beginning of July as we sometimes do. And this year, I'm growing more big

beef tomatoes than usual. They are slower to mature than small-fruited bush varieties such as 'Tumbler' and 'Tornado'.

The plants need watering in well when they are first set out, whether you plant them in pots, Gro-bags or open ground. But once they have settled and are growing away, you shouldn't water too much. Studies at the National Vegetable Research Station at Wellesbourne, Warwickshire, indicate that overwatered tomatoes (and sweetcorn, French beans and runner beans) produce leaf at the expense of fruit. Hold off until the plants begin to flower, then start watering again.

I sowed seed of the tomatoes 'Super Marmande' (Marshall's, 77p) and 'St Pierre' (Marshall's, 99p) on 18 March and raised plants inside on the kitchen windowsill. If you sow seed in a 5in pot, you can prick out the seedlings into individual 3in pots where the plants will happily stay until they are planted outside.

These are both French varieties, producing large, meaty tomatoes, sometimes oddly shaped but always superbly flavoured. 'St Pierre' is the later of the two, so I hope for a long succession of fruit. Both need to be trained up on

stakes. You also have to pinch out the side-shoots that grow out from the main stem.

These two, together with the small fruited bush tomato 'Brasero' (Mr Fothergill, £1.75) that I sowed as well, would have been enough on their own to fill the freezer. But I had a rush of blood to the head and also ordered, earlier this year, the Heritage Collection of 10 different

growing your own is being able to test different kinds each year.

The first tomatoes seen in Europe were yellow-skinned kinds, which gave them their popular name of *pomodoro*. Like potatoes, they were treated with great suspicion. Gerard said the whole plant had "a ranke and stinking savour". Early cookery writers advised cooking them for at least three hours to drive off the poi-

Shaped Purple'. Many of these must have been raised by 19th-century gardeners from seed saved from the best of their crops. The seedlings would not always have had the same characteristics as their parents. Tomato seed stays viable for at least four years.

In their homelands – Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia – tomatoes grow in dry, poor ground. Overfeeding, like overwatering, produces leafy growth at the expense of fruit. In Ecuador, tomatoes are often used as ground cover among stands of sweetcorn. Once planted, they are left to their own devices. The same combination would work here if you used bush tomatoes such as the extra-early 'Red Alert' or 'Sleatford Abundance'.

Over the past few years, there has been a boom in new varieties of outdoor tomato. Flavour develops more fully in tomatoes grown outside than it does in greenhouse fruit. And the plants don't attract whitefly in such clouds. The first outdoor types were unpopular because they started fruiting so late that half the crop was fit only for chutney. But using small cherry tomatoes such as 'Gardener's Delight' and 'Sub Arctic' as parents, breeders have produced a race of

fast-maturing, wonderfully flavoured tomatoes.

Because they don't need staking, bush tomatoes are easier to manage in Gro-bags than the upright, single-stem varieties. You don't have to pinch out side-shoots, either. If you live in the north, choose the earliest cropping bush varieties, such as 'Red Alert'.

Where space is limited, upright growing, staked tomatoes may be the option. These are often called cordons or more muddlingly "indeterminate" varieties. They don't have to be confined to stakes in the vegetable garden. Olivier de Serres, agricultural adviser to the French king Henri IV, said that growing tomatoes were often used in France to cover outhouses and arbours. That is how I am going to use my 'Broad Ripple Yellow Currant' tomato, one of the Heritage Collection. Seed of 'Yellow Currant' (£1.50) is available from W. Robinson & Sons, Sunningbank, Forton, nr Preston, Lancs PR3 0BH (01524 791210). Look out for another collection of Heritage Tomatoes in the 1998 catalogue of Mr Fothergill's Seeds, Kentford, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7QE (01638 552512).

'Flavour develops more fully in tomatoes grown outside'

tomato plants offered by Mr Fothergill. It includes obscure wonders such as 'Red Peach', never commercially grown because the flesh bruises so easily, 'Black Russian', with a purple-black skin, and 'Brandywine', an heirloom from America. My *Tomato Cookbook* (Salamander, £8.99) is going to be worked to death.

The *Fruit and Vegetable Finder* lists 126 different kinds of tomato. The delight of

son that was supposed to lurk in the fruit. Purple-skinned tomatoes such as my 'Black Russian' were once common but even in 1905, the gardener William Robinson noted in *The Vegetable Garden* that "consumers continue to favour the red varieties". I thought "consumer" was a modern term. Evidently not. Robinson listed a 'Mikado Purple', 'Purple Champion', 'Purple Ponderosa' and 'Apple-

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Last summer I went to Holland to the country's first international plant fair, held at Bingerden, Angerlo, organised by Eugénie van Weede. It's a fine 18th-century house, surrounded by parkland and a garden, much of which has been created by the van Weedes. The fair was such a success that the family have decided to hold another one this year from the 20-22 June. Nurseries from France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Britain will show and sell trees, shrubs, roses, perennials, unusual annuals and seeds. The fair is open Friday (1-6pm), Sat and Sun (10am-6pm). For more details phone (0131 313 472202).

The annual exhibition of contemporary art for outside opened earlier this month in the garden of Feeringbury Manor, Feering, Colchester, Essex, and continues until the beginning of August. Sonia Coode-Adams, the organiser, says the show concentrates on work that is "useful". I liked the sound of Patrick Kennedy's post-modern hen house, wired for sound so that the birds can be played the right kind of egg-laying music. Andrew Logan's candelabra are hung by the stream with a suitably Gothic background of ivy. The show is open weekdays, 8am-1pm. Weekends by appointment only. For details phone 01376 561946.

English Heritage has arranged a tour tomorrow, specialising in the wild plants and animals to be found in the grounds of its property, Audley End, near Saffron Walden in Essex. When Sir John Griffin inherited the great Jacobean house and its estate in 1760, he commissioned Capability Brown to lay out a new park round it. Brown dammed the River Cam to provide the statutory lake, but Sir John did not approve. He thought Brown had taken the wrong line in laying out the sheet of water. After an angry exchange of letters, Brown was sacked and seven years later, the owner employed a rather more obscure landscaper, Joseph Hicks, to correct Brown's work. The tour (free) leave at 11.30am and 2.30pm. Admission to the grounds £3.50. For more details 01799 523842.

Mr C Jones writes from Perth to say that Cerinthe major, the glaucous-leaved plant with strange purple bracts that I predicted would be the plant of 1997, has adapted well to his northern garden. "Whereas in Greece [its home] it might be expected to flower and produce its seed between mid-April and mid-May, here it comes up in August and is often still in flower at the end of November. If you want an "in" plant for the future, try *Campanula incurva*. This is a species from eastern Greece, with large bell flowers of lavender blue. I've put it on the list to grow next year.

Weekend work

Cut back broom when it has finished flowering, shortening the shoots that have flowered to within a couple of inches of the old wood. Do not cut into this older wood. Dead head lilacs and trim back *Clematis montana* if it is getting too greedy of space.

Watch for suckers on roses. They always spring from the base of the shrub and the foliage usually looks different to that of the parent. The sucker's leaves look more like a wild dog rose's. Pinch the suckers out if you can, or vice them back underground to the junction with the rootstock and cut them off there.

Cut back the foliage of early-flowering *Iris unguicularis* so that the sun can bake the rhizomes. This will increase flower power early next year. Trim off dead flower spikes of early-flowering bearded iris. Keep on top of bindweed (nurse of perfection), especially where it threatens to join up with climbers such as clematis. It is particularly difficult to extricate in situations such as these once has got a hold.

Take cuttings from pinks by pulling out non-flowering side shoots. Trim them just under a joint, so that they are about four inches long. Root them in pots of sandy compost or in a narrow trench in a side border.

Continue to make succession sowings of summer vegetables. I have been putting in more carrot Amsterdam Forcing 3 - Minicor (Mr Fothergill 99p). It's a long name for a short vegetable. The seed has been specially selected to give the best crunchy baby carrot. I've also been sowing more lettuce the iceberg variety 'Challenge' (Suttons £1.90) and endive 'Sally' (Marshall's £1.05). Endive can be sown from May through to August and will provide salad leaves up until Christmas. 'Sally' produces tightly curled heads of leaves, blanched in the centre.

Anna Pavord

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The space invaders

In three hours, 135 visitors came to see Jane Baker's backyard. She is one of many who open their garden gates to the paying public. By Julia Kaminski



The little boy already had his trousers round his knees and was looking around for a suitable flower bed when his mother caught up with him. "Not here darling," she whispered, hurrying him inside to a more appropriate venue.

That was one of the consequences Alison and John Taylor had not foreseen when they took the plunge and opened their garden to the public as part of the National Gardens Scheme. They were encouraged to do so by a neighbour and keen gardener, Valerie Craven. Before the opening, they were warned that people may try to sneak the odd cutting, but peeing in the flower-beds? Surely not.

Alison, 30, admitted to being nervous a week before the opening last weekend. "The Sunday before, I woke up with a feeling of apprehension, although the Big Day was still a week away. But on the actual day, we didn't have to do much. It's a bit like revising for an exam - you get to a point where you really can't do any more."

Most of the graft had been done in the previous six months. "We did loads of extra work," Alison said, "including brick-edging the lawn two weeks before. In the spring my pots were full of tulips and daffodils, and I had to take them out early, to put in the other plants ready for the June opening. I had to force the season a bit."

She admitted to increasing jitters as the day approached. The National Garden Scheme vetting process, by contrast, had been remarkably simple. "I thought they would ask me lots of horticultural questions," Alison said. "But they took a look at the garden and said 'yes' immediately."

On the day of opening to the public, Alison was afraid she would not be able to answer all the questions, even though she had designed and planted the garden in Greenwich, south-east London, herself. Borders are planted with lilac, buddleia, hostas and varieties of clematis. One side is hedged with young

silver birches, and a Mediterranean-style terrace is partly secluded by a trellis draped in honeysuckle and climbing roses. One of the biggest attractions (besides Spartacus the cat) is a tiny lion-faced fountain set into a wall. The patio is dotted with large terracotta pots brimming with marguerites and pink and purple petunias.

"People did ask some difficult questions," Alison said, "and there was one plant whose name I couldn't remember because it was quite new and I'd thrown away the information. It flowered for the first time just a few days before, and looked spectacular - blue petals with a red centre. So of course, everyone wanted to know what it was, and I couldn't tell them. Now I know - an anagallis."

John Taylor escaped that part of the nightmare by welcoming people and selling tickets - the cost of a visit was £2, which covered entrance to this and a neighbouring garden. "I wasn't asked many questions, thankfully," he said. "Though someone did enquire as to where we bought our curtains. I was most worried that no one would come, or that they would all come at once towards the end. In fact, the first guy arrived early, at five to 11. I was expecting a friend, and was holding a hammer when I answered the door."

Ten doors away, Jane and Peter Baker were also opening to the public and they were equally nervous - but for different reasons. Their garden, in sharp contrast to the Taylors', is on an extremely steep slope and has been landscaped on four levels, with tall retaining walls. "I was terrified people would fall down the steps," Jane said. "I was worried they would behave badly. Most of all, I was scared there wouldn't be enough cakes."

"We were persuaded to open to the public because much of the money goes to the Cancer Relief Macmillan Fund. I actually wanted to open the house so people could view the garden

from higher up, but the organisers warned me against it. They said they'd never had any trouble, but just in case... And in the end, people were absolutely lovely. Angelic."

Jane had her garden designed and planted by Anna Lainé, a neighbour and garden designer, who was on hand to answer questions.

"Plants need to have impact," Anna Lainé said, "and you should try to achieve a balance between leaf shape and texture and colour. You must have a contrast between delicate foliage and something bold, such as this *Fatsia japonica*. Jane likes things natural, as I do, so we've let things seed in the crevices of the walls."

Grey foliage such as *senecio* mingles with pink cistus, purple sage, lavender, thymes, and a tall purple fennel. The lower, shady terrace has a woodland feel, with white forget-me-nots and forget-me-nots. White flowering clematis tumble over the walls. The top level, a secluded sun-trap, is full of pink and purple blooms - *phlox* *italica*, lavender and roses.

Was the ordeal a success? In three hours the Bakers had 135 visitors, aged from several months to nearly 90, and at least one professional gardener. A few doors down the Taylors were also pleased with the outcome of their open day. "It was quite a social event," Alison said. "People say there's no community spirit in London, but this proves that's not true. Everyone was genuinely friendly. Neighbours and even the convent over the road offered us help."

Alison encountered one visitor who had been born a few doors away more than 80 years ago. Another woman had come to the house 30 years ago for her wedding dress fitting.

As the last satisfied visitors drifted away, an air of relief and elation settled on the hosts. Bottles of wine were opened, a large bric produced alongside fresh crusty bread. "I feel euphoric," Jane said. "We could do it again, couldn't we?"



Open day: Alison and John Taylor's garden above and top; Jane Baker's terraces below



PHOTOGRAPHS: ENIMA BOAM

A mint for good causes

Celebrating its 70th anniversary, the National Gardens Scheme is a charity that raises money by opening gardens to the public (last year it raised more than £1.3m). Whether gardeners of rolling estate parkland or miniature suburban Edens, owners whose gardens are considered worthy of entry into The National Gardens Scheme directory (*Gardens of England and Wales Open for Charity* - the hallowed "Little Yellow Book") contribute to more than 700 charitable causes by charging a modest fee for entry to their gardens, providing teas and selling cuttings.

Owners wishing to open their gardens under the scheme are required to meet a certain, if nebulous, standard: their efforts must be able to sustain the interest of "a keen gardener" for about 45 minutes who may have travelled 15 or 20 miles to get there. The informal assessment process - the scheme stresses that this is not "a horticultural judgement" - is carried out by the county organisers (volunteers whose own gardens have once had to undergo consideration for the scheme) and usually takes place over the summer. As one organiser put it, they "get to know your garden" for about an hour.

A straw poll of county organisers seemed to suggest that most gardens are accepted on to the scheme, though they emphasised that this was a testament to the excellent horticultural standard of gardens put forward. The organisers I spoke to squirmed at the prospect of turning a garden down: "People are offering something very dear to them for nothing". If shrubberies look a bit slipshod, organisers, like Joanna Kerr in Gwent, are the epitome of tact: "We make suggestions and encourage them to try again in a year or two."

As for the gardens themselves, almost anything goes. As Penny Snell says: "If the garden is excellent in its own right, even if it's not to my taste, we'll take it on." You needn't litter your beds with rare and exotic flora, according to Ray Brown, Derbyshire organiser. "Your plants can be pretty ordinary - it's the overall composition that matters."

Publication deadlines for details of the gardens to be entered in the "Little Yellow Book" mean final considerations are made by late September. If successful, garden owners are contacted early in the spring concerning the arrangements for opening. Owners set the entrance charges and may open as many times as they wish. The scheme gives considerable support and provides printed signs and security advice.

There is little doubt that an entry in the Yellow Book does no harm to the value of your property, but the organisers demur at such suggestions. "Some owners think it has as certain cachet, but that really isn't in the spirit of the National Gardens Scheme," insists Michael Stone, assistant organiser in Devon. Nicky Pickett of the Royal Horticultural Society agrees, adding: "Not only is it a great charity, but people get to see what can be achieved with very limited resources in some cases."

To celebrate the National Garden Scheme's 70th anniversary, the RHS gardens at Wisley are being opened on the evenings of 18 June, 6.30-9pm and 14 August, 6.30-9pm. Admission is £3, in aid of the scheme. For more details 01483 211 535.

The National Garden Scheme Yellow Book, *Gardens of England and Wales Open for Charity 1997*, £3.50, is available from most good bookshops. Or write to the National Gardens Scheme, Hatchlands Park, East Clarendon, Guildford, Surrey GU4 7RT, with a cheque for £4.25.

Mike Higgins

Hope springs in horticulture

Gardening really is therapeutic. By Patricia Cleveland Peck

Horticultural Therapy recently opened a new garden in the East End of London. HT is a charity dedicated to helping people with physical or mental disabilities enjoy a better quality of life through gardening - last year they helped at least 20,000 people. Their three-quarter-acre site, St Mary's Garden, situated behind the Gefrey Museum in Haggerston, Hackney, not only provides a welcome green space in a rather grim urban area but is also particularly suitable for people with special needs.

It was in fact originally laid out as a community garden some years ago, and beneath a blanket of brambles and weeds, HT volunteers uncovered a well-designed space containing not only wide paths, hard surfaces and the vestiges of raised beds - all of importance to wheel-chair users - but also arched trellises and spreading shrubs.

During its years of neglect, the garden had been vandalised, but many of the plants have proved incredibly resilient. Among them are huge architectural phormiums, clematis, a herb area and banks of mauve cistus. A pond will be the only addition to a large wild area with mature ash, birch and lime trees, thick undergrowth and grass studded with wildflowers. Another large area has been

Rotovated and awaits soil improvement and vegetable planting. It will be divided into beds one metre square, a size which the physically and mentally handicapped clients, some of whom are also blind, will not find too daunting. Wide paths

'When you have a stroke you lose confidence. But coming to the garden has given me that back'

between the beds will allow them to sit, kneel or even lie down to work. Clients will come on day placement, and for each of them, HT's trained staff prepare a programme based on individual rehabilitation or learning needs. The numbers in

each group range from a dozen or so down to two or three in the case of the severely disabled or those with very challenging behaviour.

Karen Osborn, HT's dynamic London Regional manager, explained that for many clients, the job of growing even a lettuce can be a complicated one: from sowing to harvesting, they need to exercise the physical skills of digging, raking, drilling, watering, weeding and cutting, as well as the mental skills of basic numeracy skills in counting seedlings and measuring space between rows.

And the clients are working with others in a green and pleasant environment. Ray Castle, an ex-publican and regular user of HT's Battersea Garden, comments "When you have a stroke you lose so much self-confidence. People don't know how to react - even my friends. I became very depressed. Coming here has given me all that back. It's about being part of the community; getting to know people and carrying on friendships while you develop new skills."

In fact the therapy of horticulture is nothing new. The 18th-century poet William Cowper wrote movingly of the respite his garden and greenhouse offered him when he was in the throes of suicidal depression. What is new, and something to

which HT has been able make a valuable contribution during the 18 years it has been operating, is research based on client data which has put the subject on a firm scientific footing. There are now courses to train horticultural therapists in the US and Germany and at Coventry University in this country. HT also runs its own Land Use Volunteers Service, known as LUVS, to train horticulturalists in therapeutic skills.

Meanwhile, the opening of St Mary's Garden represents a triumphant outcome of a long struggle. In such a densely residential area, this little patch of green could so easily have disappeared beneath bulldozers if HT had not prevailed upon Hackney Council to lease it to them at a peppercorn rent. It is HT's hope that local people will appreciate the enhancement to the environment and even participate by coming into the garden as volunteers - and probably improve their own outlook on life in doing so.

St Mary's Garden is in Pearson Street, Haggerston, London E2. Other HT gardens are at Battersea Park, London SW11; Trunkwell Park, Reading; and Ryton, near Coventry. Horticultural Therapy is at Goulds Ground, Vallis Way, Frome, Somerset BA11 3BY (01373 464782)

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[R0601]

Valley in the shadow

As the obliteration of the countryside by new housing continues, Duff Hart-Davis attacks a scheme in the Cotswolds

It was Lord Byron who attracted the celebrated denunciation "mad, bad and dangerous to know". But from the way people in our neck of the woods are talking, you would think that Lady Caroline Lamb's stinging epithets now apply exclusively to the planning committee of Stroud District Council.

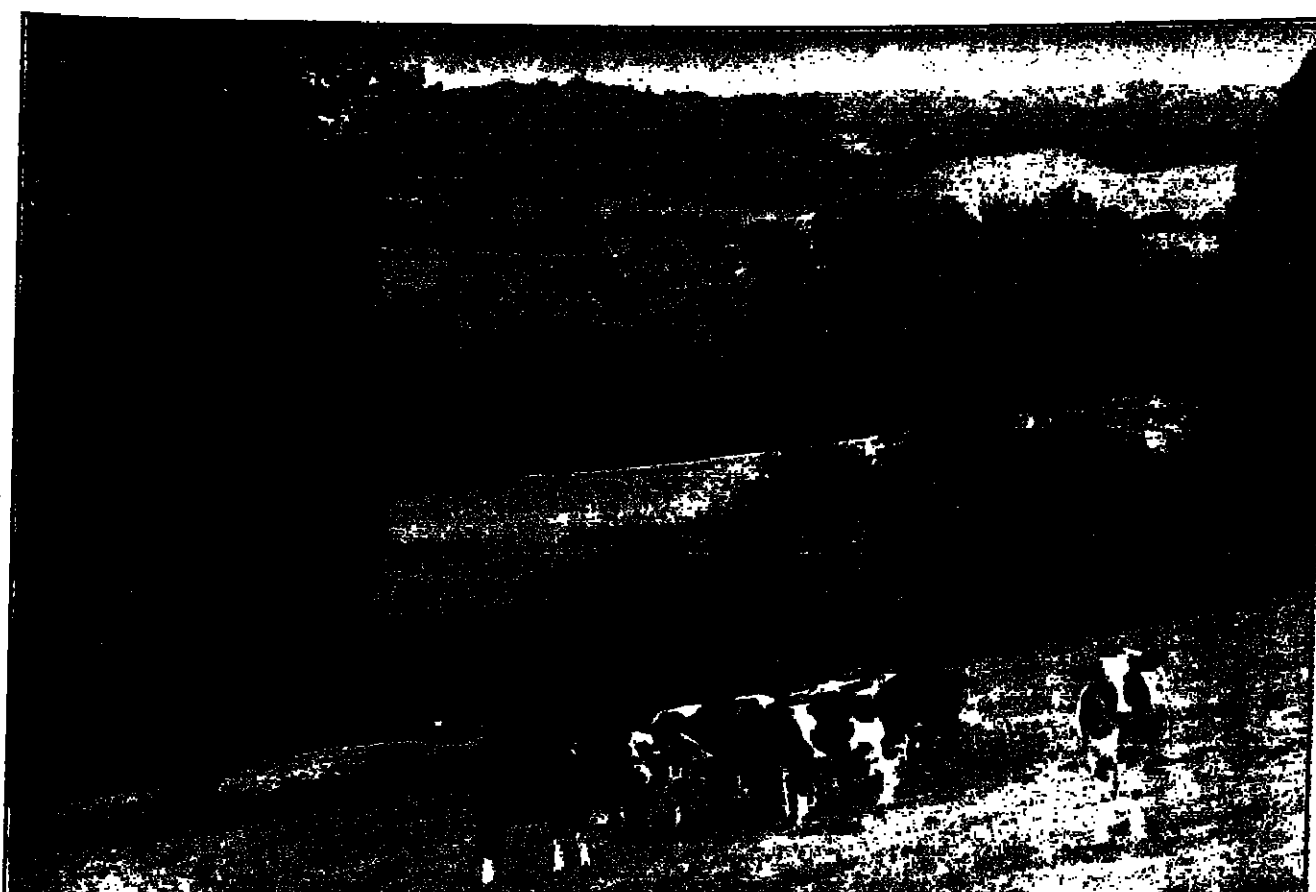
It is true that the planners are faced with a hideous task. The Department of the Environment has decreed that Gloucestershire must find space for 53,000 new houses by 2011, and the struggle to accommodate them all is a nightmare, because almost every community in the county is fighting with feline ferocity to ward off development.

Nevertheless, the planning committee's latest major proposal is surely its most provocative yet: to create a settlement of 1,400 new dwellings, and a 25-acre industrial site, on farmland at the southern end of the glorious Painswick Valley.

To the planners, the key attraction of the site is its proximity to Stroud, the main provider of jobs and facilities in the area. Only those who know the ground can appreciate what a disaster the scheme would be in terms of conservation. From a narrow point at its lower end, the valley opens out northwards into a shallow V, with fields rising gently on either hand. Most of the threatened land lies on the eastern side, but 400 houses are proposed for the fields round Callowell Farm, on the western side.

In the view of locals, the site is totally unsuitable for mass development. First because it is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and second because it is in the middle of the Cotswold Environmentally Sensitive Area. Almost all the scattered stone buildings date from the 18th century or earlier, and the land has been farmed kindly, so that the meadows are full of wildflowers, with old-fashioned varieties such as yellow rattle and black medick much in evidence. Small comfort might be taken from the Council for the Preservation of Rural England's concern, expressed this week, about planners encroaching on the countryside.

But it seems that for the planners the



Fields of conflict: glorious Painswick Valley - under threat of becoming a sea of cement

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS JONES

appeal of Painswick is too much to resist. And when the scheme came to light, the locals rose in wrath. A leak from the Stroud District Council revealed that the settlement would be announced at a meeting of the planning committee, and more than 200 interested parties crowded into the hall. Tempers, already flaring, were further inflamed by some of the answers given by the Chief Planning Officer, David Buckle.

When asked why the settlement could not be built on the disused airfield at Aston Down, near Minchinhampton, he replied that he would prefer to fight the people of Painswick, rather than those of Minchinhampton. (Can it be that they are posher and have more clout?) When somebody objected that the Painswick valley is in an AONB, and that if 1,000 houses were built in it, nowhere would be safe, he replied "we already can build where we like".

That one outrageous remark perfectly illustrates the futility of present planning controls. Never mind that AONBs are theoretically as sacrosanct as National Parks. Recent experience has repeatedly shown that planners can ignore conser-

vation guidelines with total impunity.

The people who would suffer most if the new scheme went ahead are the inhabitants of Pitchcombe, a village perched on the western flank of the valley. They would look across not at a patchwork of fields and woods, but at a solid mass of houses. Goaded by that prospect, they held an emergency meeting in the village hall and immediately raised £850 in cash to form a fighting fund. Now they and various other protest organisations have amalgamated into the Painswick Valley Group.

Protesters are fervently hoping that John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, meant what he said when he promised recently that his administration intends to put the environment "at the heart of Government". The new Labour MP for Stroud, David Drew, seems to have no such notion - last week he told the *Stroud News and Journal*: "If the people of Painswick and Callowell think they can get me to put it [the settlement] elsewhere, they can forget it."

But Mr Drew is at least proposing to challenge the Department of the Environment on the overall total of new houses

needed. Before he went down in flames, the Conservative Secretary of State for the Environment, John Gummer, admitted that the national figure he gave of 4.4 million was misconceived: what he meant, he said, was that number of households, rather than separate dwellings.

Privately commissioned research has shown that the realistic figure for Gloucestershire may be closer to 41,000 than 53,000, and Stroud has been campaigning vigorously to have its own allocation reduced. But even the lower figure is a terrifying number. In the words of Mike Sell, the council's Principal Local Plans Officer, "our problem in providing houses is very great. Obviously we're aware that the issue is highly controversial, but there are no easy sites, and no easy solutions".

The next step will come on Thursday, when the planners formally ask the Council for permission to go out to public consultation. The debate is scheduled to last all summer - and its acrimonious nature will reflect the acute discomfort by which innumerable rural communities are gripped as they struggle to face the future.

Out of the woods

Love is in the air, along with the elusive and weird woodcock

"This is a perfect place to see roding woodcock - but it's the only time of year you'll have the chance. These must be one of the most difficult birds to spot." Richard Knight, an RSPB warden, was standing by the edge of a wood in the Elan Valley in mid-Wales with amateur naturalists drawn by the rare chance to see one of Britain's strangest birds.

Woodcock are inland members of the wader family and like their more familiar shore-line cousins, use their long beaks to probe for invertebrates. By day they hide in woods, venturing into nearby pastures at night to rummage for worms, larvae and small insects.

Those habits, combined with superb camouflage, make them very hard to observe. Normally the best one can expect is a clatter of wing beats as the bird leaves the leaf mould and disappears rapidly with a jinking flight.

Although Dr Andrew Hoodless, a lowland game-bird research scientist at the Game Conservancy, studied the species for his thesis, he rarely saw his subjects, instead tracking them by radio. "From October to April they only really feed at night," he said. "And even during the summer they're rarely seen far from cover."

Now is an ideal time to catch a glimpse of this elusive bird, however, as the males patrol their territories at dusk. That is known as "roding" and consists of adult males, performing the avian equivalent of kerb-crawling. They fly slowly and deliberately around the perimeters of their territories, uttering a succession of clicks and croaks to attract females. When one appears, they mate quickly, and the male then continues his patrol.

Successful male woodcock mate with several females. The fathers play no part in the rearing of the chicks, but the mothers appear to make up for this with the endearing habit of ferrying their chicks away from danger, flying

with the young between their feet. Unfortunately woodcock appear to be yet another species in decline. According to the latest British Trust for Ornithology survey, numbers declined by 37 per cent between the late Sixties and late Eighties. But Dr Hoodless maintains that changes in methodology of counting woodcock make direct comparisons almost impossible.

The birds prefer deciduous woodland with an under-storey of plants such as ground elder or bluebells to protect them from predators. Even so, Dr Hoodless says, they are vulnerable to aerial attack, and increased raptor numbers since the Sixties may have affected populations. "Several of

my study birds were taken by female sparrowhawks in April and May," he said.

Whatever the overall picture, the birds remain relatively common, with an estimated 3,500 to 21,500 "pairs", and are widely distributed through the country - although they are largely absent from Cornwall;

Devon and much of the Cotswolds. No one knows quite why that should be so, but Dr Hoodless suggests it could be linked to the availability of suitable copes. In areas such as Derbyshire, numbers can rise to 18-22 per square kilometre.

Fortunately for Richard Knight's party, the Elan Valley is densely populated. As the group waited patiently between sunset and nightfall, a male appeared. The first sign was a distant clicking sound, followed by a strange croaking, as the squat, round-winged bird flew overhead just above the tree line. He made three circuits of the valley and it was only when it became too dark to follow his progress that the watchers turned back to their cars.

Daniel Butler

For information on where to see woodcock contact your local Wildlife Trust - for details, call the Wildlife Trust central office on 01522 544 400.



The woodcock, now courting

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Chapel Lane, Forest Row,
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Club
Stane Street, Slinfield, Horsham,
W.Sussex

Mill Hill GC
100 Barnet Way, Mill Hill,
London

Stockley Park GC
The Clubhouse, Stockley Park,
Uxbridge, Middlesex

Grim's Dyke GC
Oxhey Lane, Hatch End, Pinner,
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The Essex Golf & Country Club
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Edenbridge Golf & Country Club
Crouch House End, Edenbridge,
Kent

Prince's GC
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Forrester Park GC
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Sussex

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Art for art's sake: Will Ramsay has revolutionised art buying with his very public hangings PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIAN DENNIS

Where there's a Will's there's a way

Want to buy some art but don't want to buy into the art world? Rosie Millard has the answer

Modern British art is very desirable and groovy at the moment. From Minneapolis to Venice, the international arts establishment is falling over itself with enthusiasm to exhibit Brit creativity, whether involving installations with fried eggs, large pictures of human excreta, or anything floating in formaldehyde. A brief flick through *Blimey!*, Matthew Collings' paperback guide to the BritPack (and this month's coffee-table must-have), reveals the extent of the market's current heady success.

But for those who wish to take a little bit of our native success home with them, it's a bit more tricky. Collings' book is very enthusiastic, but it's very in. Once you've figured out who all these hip people are, and where you can buy their work, you have another problem. I mean, could you really live with, say, Abigail Lane's "life-size hyper-realistic sculpture of Angus Fairhurst lying naked on the floor except for an anorak?" For those who have grown out of Athena, but aren't quite ready to get to grips with a Jake and Dinos Chapman phallic-headed mannequin in their living room, salvation is at hand.

Will's Art Warehouse is down a small alley in the striped-shirt wearing, Pimm's-quaffing arena of Parsons Green, south London. It's been going for about six months and is the invention of Will Ramsay, 28, who himself was inspired by the man who invented B&O. "I heard about this place he'd set up in Eastleigh which sold contemporary art in a very approachable way. I began to wonder if there was a gap in the market to do the same thing in London."

And he discovered there was. Will investigated the inner sancta where the BritPack dealer reigns supreme - Cork Street, Fitzrovia, Hoxton, Hackney. "I deliberately dressed down. I went to all the modern art galleries, to see how I was treated. And I was ignored. No-one tried to help me. The whole scene was for people in smart suits with loft conversions."

Will's Art Warehouse, by contrast, is built in a converted motorbike garage, and is for people who, according to Will, "aren't arty types, don't have a huge amount of money, but like the idea of having some contemporary art around. They don't want something handed down from their granny - but also they don't want a video installation groaning away in the corner of their living-room. People know about style, and they want to be fashionable. They like contemporary furniture, and aren't frightened to go into Heal's or the Conran Shop to buy it. But they're frightened to buy art."

Art at Will's costs from £100 to £2,000. Everything is framed up; you simply lift it off the wall and cart it away. Or you can wait until the end of the month, when the whole display in the gallery is changed. The warehouse is equipped with eight moveable screens; the screens and the vast wall space are hung with 150 to 200 pictures each month, about six times as many as a conventional Mayfair gallery.

Of course, its location is a godsend. A suburban haven packed with fairly affluent first-time buyers all boasting nice empty hanging space in their pine kitchens, Parson's Green is just the sort of place where people might quite like to buy middle-of-the-road contemporary art. And it's exactly the right spot for Will, himself hardly a product of the art school mafia.

"I went to Eton," he says. "And then I read geography at university." He stretches out one velvet-clad leg and grins at me with rather an alarmingly wide smile. Does a CV come any more unhip than that? I'm thinking. "And then I was in the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards. Commanding tanks." An ex-army officer-cum-art dealer? "Captain, actually. When I was at university, I did question the sense of going into the Army, but I was being sponsored by the Guards and was committed for five years after I graduated. So I thought I might as well do that before setting up as an art dealer. It is odd to start off from such an uncommercial and completely uncreative environment as the Army, but I've always loved art."

"My idea was to be a bit like Oddbins, because I think art is rather like wine," says Will. "Tastes have developed in wine. People don't want to just swill beer anymore. Whereas the merchants in St James's cater for people with cellars, Oddbins deals with people who just want a nice bottle of red. I know nothing about wine, yet I can go in there and they have

staff who are friendly and tell you what's good. Hello," says Will, in a friendly sort of way, to two girls who have walked in.

"I mean," he continues, "art and wine are subjects people feel they should know about. But you don't want to ask, in case you're made a fool of. In some London galleries you dread asking anything about a painting in case the girl behind the desk says 'Don't you think it's reminiscent of Matisse?'. And you haven't a clue who Matisse is."

To this end Will has introduced crib sheets, stuck on the wall alongside the paintings. It's a clever idea. They give the artists' age, history and a creative statement explaining the thinking behind the work. "So you can talk knowledgeably about your purchase at dinner parties," says Will helpfully. There are also pamphlets on artistic techniques by the till, explaining what things like acrylic paint are. They're not for the typical Matthew Collings reader, admittedly, but the service provides a fairly useful novice's guide all the same.

This month's exhibition is nothing if not eclectic: there's abstract work, a healthy dose of figurative stuff, plus landscapes and portraits, and nothing too big for a domestic wall. Some of the work looks a little desperate, but by the same token, I'd be quite happy to walk away with a few of the paintings on show. And with 200 works on offer, there's a wide scope and an extremely democratic price range. The artists themselves are selected each month by Will's curator Ian Harris; none of them is "owned" by the gallery. If the work isn't sold, it's returned.

Will has big plans to expand. "We're covering the overheads here at the moment, but after this one bottoms out financially, I'd like to think about opening another, possibly in Leeds, or Manchester. Or Glasgow. A large city with groovy people in it."

When I get home I speak to an artist I know who is part of the New British Art scene, and ask him what he thinks of Will's Art Warehouse. "My God," he says. "I've heard of this man. But I wouldn't be seen dead putting my work in there." It was just what I imagine Will would like to hear.

Will's Art Warehouse, Unit 3, Heathman's Road, London SW16 (0171-371 8787). Open 7 days a week: weekdays 10.30am-6pm, weekends 10.30am-6pm. Rosie Millard is the BBC's Arts Correspondent

The Time: Father's Day, 15 June, 1997

The Place: Your home The Essentials...

Men are notoriously difficult to buy for and fathers can be the hardest. Stuck for an original idea we often resort to desperate purchases, like cartoon character socks and musical boxer shorts, which seemed zany at the time but aren't likely to make it to the washing line. This time there's no need to panic, as we've selected some practical and stylish gifts that he really will appreciate.



He won't mind waking up to these chrome bathroom accessories, mirror £25.95, pump bottles £14.95 and small container £6.95, along with a splash of lime and verbena aftershave lotion at £10.95. All from the Conran Shop

Update his wardrobe with these woven silk plain or check ties between £29 to £49 from Liberty



After a hard day's work he'll enjoy mixing himself a drink with this retro style blue soda siphon at £49.94 from Jerry's Home Store

Scotch and soda in hand he can head for the garden to soak up the evening sun in a settler suede chair at £125 from the Conran Shop (below the radio) while listening to mellow sounds on this Fifties Roberts Revival 250 radio at £100 from major department stores



Keep his life in order with a Tykho calculator which comes in red, yellow or blue at £18.50 from Paperchase

If cooking isn't one of his strong points, encourage him to experiment with recipes from this 'Dad's Own Cook Book' from Jerry's Home Store. At £8.99 it could prove a worthwhile investment.

But if his culinary skills are best forgotten pack him off on a golfing weekend to somewhere like the four-star Cally Palace Hotel in Dumfries and Galloway where he can practice his strokes on the 18-hole course at £71 per night. Telephone 01557 814344 Janet Knight

A LIFE OF FACTS

What was spent on men's clothes: 1991 and 1996

	At current prices			At constant prices		
	1991	1996 (est)	% change 1991-96	1991	1996 (est)	% change 1991-96
Shirts	1,336	1,644	+23	1,336	1,612	+21
Underwear	540	655	+21	540	640	+18
Suits	694	605	-13	694	593	-15
Jackets	404	497	+23	404	487	+21
Coats/raincoats	335	348	+4	335	341	+2

Source: Mintel

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An upside down world

A new kind of map could change the way you see the world, writes Mike Higgins

"Sir, the noblest prospect that a Scot ever sees, is the high road that leads him to London." All very fine for Dr Johnson, but navigating Britain's labyrinth of roads at speeds of 70mph with confusing directions has made the reality a little more frustrating. "Just leave it to me ... OK, right, so it's left at the junction onto the ... er - hold on, map's upside down - the A38 and then right off the roundabout, NO left - got to turn it round - into ... um hang on ... something lane ... OK, WELL, YOU TRY READING THIS MAP THE WRONG WAY UP!"

It's an all too familiar scene of hard shoulder mutiny which usually ends with the woman losing her way, losing her temper and losing the argument. Now that could be at an end thanks to a former double-glazing salesman.

Turning the traditional road atlas on its head, 25-year-old Ashley Sims' *Upside Down Map* has given the cartographically challenged a reversed image of the UK's road system alongside a traditional set of maps.

Adding to the north's legendary catalogue of grievances, Ashley believes that getting down south with traditional road maps is a tricky business: "If you turn the map upside down, the place names are unreadable and if you read the map backwards in the direction you are driving, right-hand turns and places are on the left and vice versa."

The problem is not a new one for the Sims family. Trucking back from Scotland to Derby in the 1970s, Ashley's father, John, 52, was for ever turning right when he should have been taking a left ... right? Exactly. "Travelling north I had no problems. But I found the long journey back with the same map very difficult. I couldn't understand why anybody hadn't printed a map the other way round to eliminate the problem."

Highway highbrows may see the *Upside Down Map* as another example of navigational "dumbing down" - a low-tech accompaniment to increasingly common in-car electronic guidance systems - but Ashley's ingenious idea is set to make him

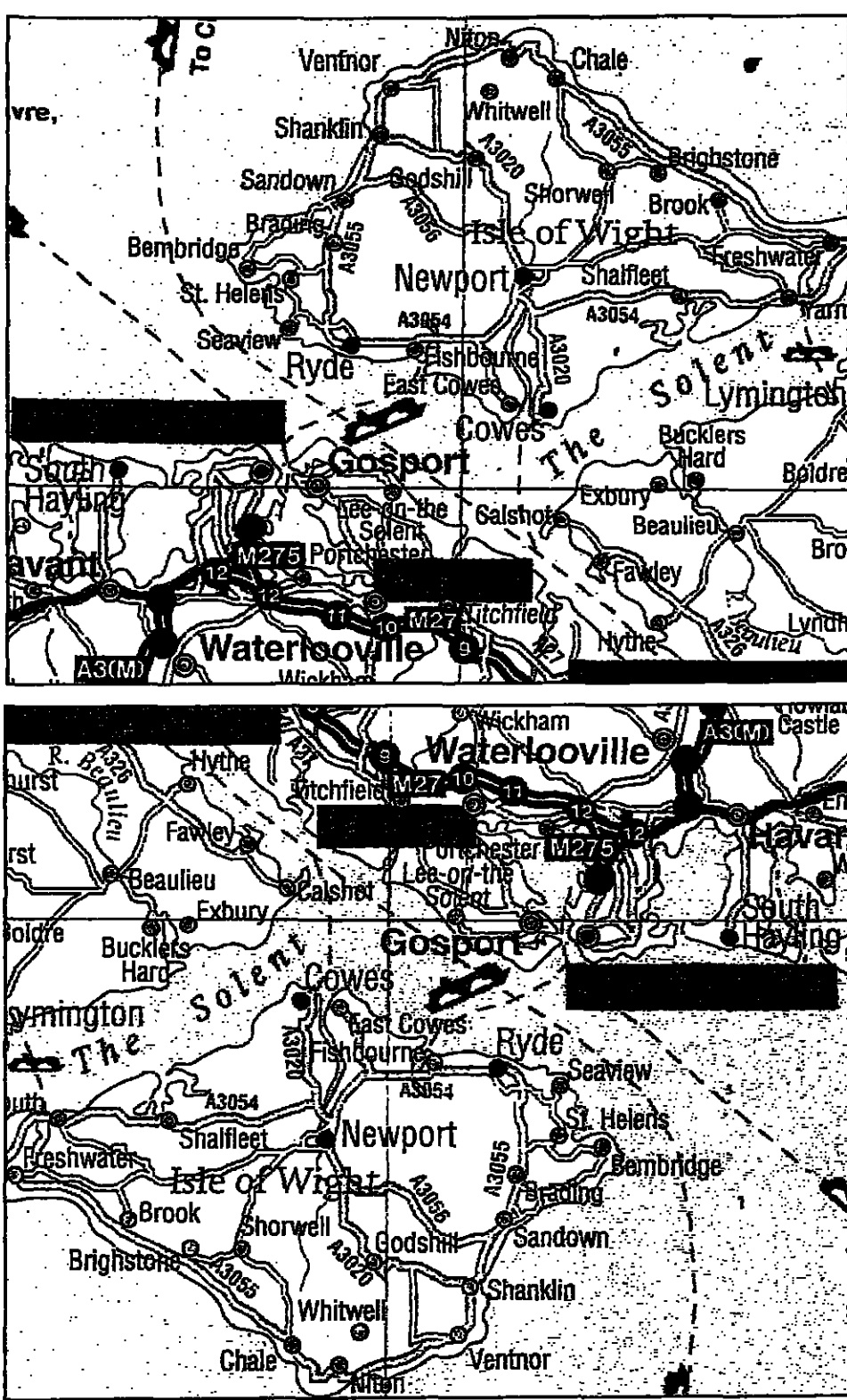
a fortune. Though the major map companies told his father to get lost, Ashley decided to publish the maps himself, with the help of an £8,000 loan from his parents. Deals with John Menzies and W H Smiths look set to make the young inventor £1m.

Though cynics scoff that the *Upside Down Map* will only find its way into the glove compartments of befuddled Scottish women, getting tied up in Spaghetti Junction or disappearing into the Watford Gap affects everyone: each year drivers waste 80 million gallons of petrol getting lost, according to the AA. This week the RAC was noticeably more enthusiastic than its rivals in their approval of the new maps, as the AA admitted that it had once rejected an idea similar to Ashley's as "commercially unviable". "We know that people turn maps upside down on their journeys, so maybe this new book of maps will help."

The AA also added fuel to the debate over women's apparent inability to read maps as well as men. "We have done some research on it" a spokeswoman confirmed. "It is all to do with visual spatial skills. Men do tend to be better in unfamiliar surroundings. They are more likely to use a map, while women are more likely to ask for directions." Of course, which method gets you from A to B without going through Z, is open to question.

Professional women drivers are in no doubt as to their navigational talents, however. As a woman and a Scot, former World Champion rally driver Louisa Aitken-Walker has got a beef with both the *Upside Down Map* and the AA.

With the aid of female co-drivers and map readers, she has successfully traversed some of the world's least navigable terrain: "I've had no problem getting out of Scotland," she insisted. "Women only get lost because they've got their husbands screaming at them," she says, adding that some of the world's top male rally drivers choose to have female co-drivers. Travelling hundreds of miles every week in her company car, saleswoman Ani Sahakian dismissed the *Upside Down Map* as a gimmick: "I'm bright enough to know my left from my right ... I never, ever get lost."



Details from the 'Upside Down Map'

Under the counter

with Lindsay Calder

It wasn't a shotgun wedding. We got married three months after announcing our engagement - not because I had something to hide behind my bouquet, but because of that old MCC rule: Marriage Conforms to Cricket. It was a toss-up between March, before the cricket season started, or September, when it finished. Well, I was damned if I was going to sit at the edge of the boundary every weekend with copies of *Brides* magazine so I rose to the challenge, and went for an early declaration - March.

The wedding itself went well - rain didn't stop play, and we got everyone out before tea. Apart from being made to look like dwarves in our wedding photos by two huge opening bowlers who doubled up as ushers, and our bagpiper unilaterally deciding to play the theme from *Test Match Special* as I arrived at the church, it was perfect.

But no sooner had I tossed my bouquet in the air than I was a cricket widow. My honeymoon in the Caribbean may have been the envy of my friends, but what a coincidence - our trip to Barbados coincided exactly with the Fourth Test (England v the West Indies) so, it was balls to the beach, we've got cricket to watch. Romantic honeymoon suppers by the lapping waves would have been nice, but as half of London's cricket fraternity had decamped to Barbados, it was more a case of nights out with the lads. Also staying in our hotel was commentator Jonathan Agnew, so evenings in the hotel bar were spoken for as Aggers and my husband mused over cricketing conundrums such as "What was going through Gary Sobers' mind before he hit his sixth six off Malcolm Nash in one over in 1968?" Aggers was so impressed by his answer to this that he arranged to have him interviewed for the *Today* programme. The gist of the interview was supposed to be:

"England supporter in Barbados - what do you think of the boys so far?" It actually went something like: "What does your wife think about spending her honeymoon at a Test match?" Answer: "She's responding well to treatment", and so it carried on. Not a mention of Asherton's Barry Army, just Lindsay's hairy honeymoon. Everyone heard their cornflakes as my husband chuckled over the airwaves into their kitchens. It was almost a very short marriage.

I have survived three seasons since, and have decided that it is a ridiculous game. Just look at the field names - silly mid-off, deep square leg, short third man and short fine leg. As for the bowling - googlies, yorkers and chinamen. Last week, I began to wonder if you could really call it a sport at all as I watched "The Blumentalks" and Hurlingham Club pass the port after lunch and tucked into cakes and scones at tea. It has not escaped my notice that the England team have been doing rather better lately, but I don't put it down to New Labour; I just think they've cut out the scones and clotted cream.

I am standing firm - I have never and will never make a cricket tea, and I refuse to let every weekend be subsumed by this eight-hour game. I have even introduced a new lbw rule - "Lindsay before wickets".

Playing the game: Slazenger V100 Ultimate Extreme bat (being used by Australian batsman Mark Waugh in the current Test series) £189.99; balls from £6.99 each; Lara International helmet £40; pads £40-£105 a pair; gloves £14-£50; Gunn and Moore trousers £22.99 and shirt £17.99; boots £25.99-£59.99; protective box £2.99, and a "coffin" to keep it all in £60. All from Lords Shop, Lords Cricket Ground, St John's Wood, London NW8. 0171 432 1021.

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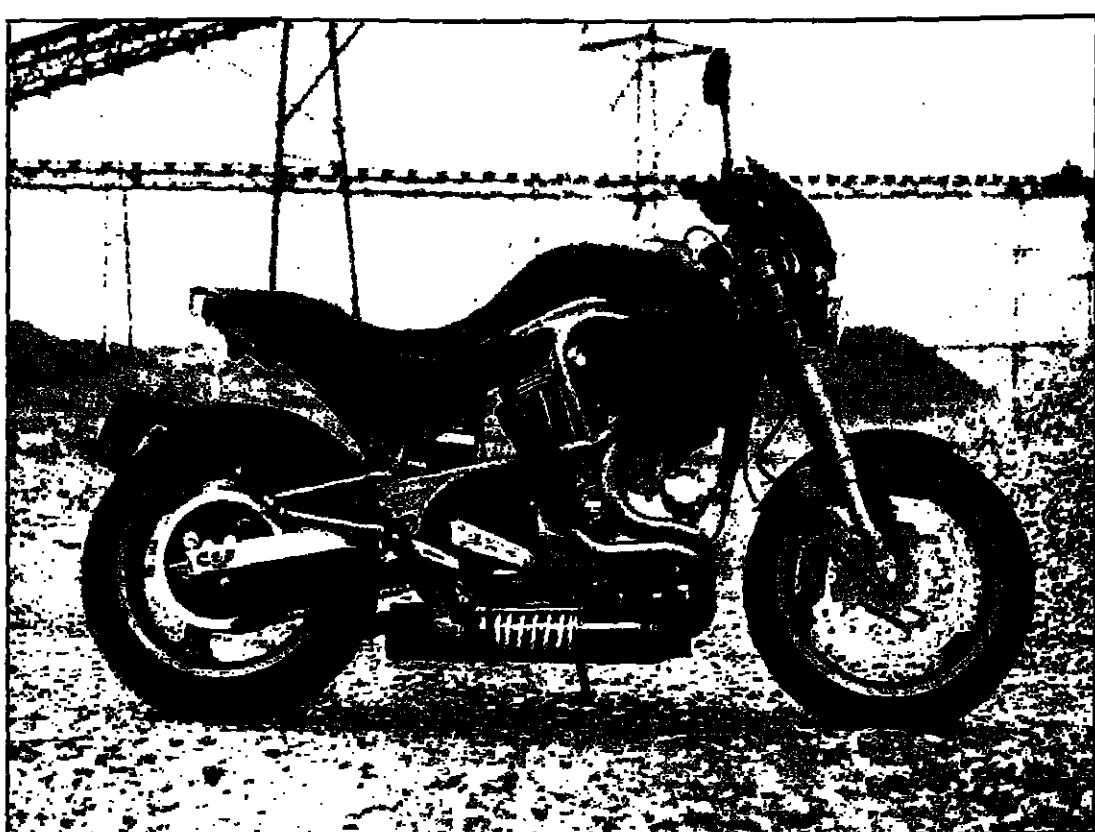
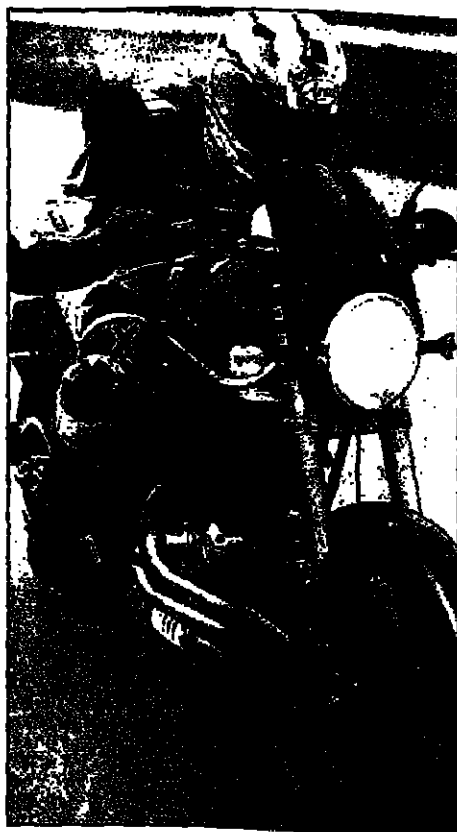
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CREATIVE WOMAN SLIM, tall, funny, 42 with man of passion, wit & principle for mutual enrichment ... & caring relationship. Photo please. London. Box No 12260

TIERED OF BEING alone? Professional lady (27) seeks attractive, solvent, unattached male (30-40) for warm loving relationship. Enjoys food, wine, film and travel. Must like children as has 7 yr old son. Photo please. London. Box No 12261

ANGUS DEAYTON O.N.O., sought by tall, gorgeous woman, late 30's, kind, lively, forthright, quick-witted. My interests: film, walking, music, food, late dancing. Please incl. Photo No. Box No 12262

EDUCATED RITA WILM gentleman who does not prefer blouses for fun and friendship. GSOH 40s late 40s/early 50s/late 50s/early 60s/late 60s/early 70s/late 70s/early 80s/late 80s/early 90s/late 90s/early 00s/late 00s/early 01s/late 01s/early 02s/late 02s/early 03s/late 03s/early 04s/late 04s/early 05s/late 05s/early 06s/late 06s/early 07s/late 07s/early 08s/late 08s/early 09s/late 09s/early 10s/late 10s/early 11s/late 11s/early 12s/late 12s/early 13s/late 13s/early 14s/late 14s/early 15s/late 15s/early 16s/late 16s/early 17s/late 17s/early 18s/late 18s/early 19s/late 19s/early 20s/late 20s/early 21s/late 21s/early 22s/late 22s/early 23s/late 23s/early 24s/late 24s/early 25s/late 25s/early 26s/late 26s/early 27s/late 27s/early 28s/late 28s/early 29s/late 29s/early 30s/late 30s/early 31s/late 31s/early 32s/late 32s/early 33s/late 33s/early 34s/late 34s/early 35s/late 35s/early 36s/late 36s/early 37s/late 37s/early 38s/late 38s/early 39s/late 39s/early 40s/late 40s/early 41s/late 41s/early 42s/late 42s/early 43s/late 43s/early 44s/late 44s/early 45s/late 45s/early 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Raging Buell

Packing an 86 horsepower punch, the Lightning is a weapon on wheels, writes Roland Brown

Erik Buell's life reads like a bike enthusiast's dream. Buell was an engineer at Harley-Davidson's Milwaukee base before leaving in 1984 to set up his own business nearby. Working out of a barn alongside his house, he hand-built sports bikes powered by his former employer's V-twin engines.

Buell's production numbers were low, prices were high and times were initially hard. But, backed by racing success (Erik himself was a rider of some note), the company and its reputation grew. Then, four years ago, came Buell's big break: Harley-Davidson, looking to move into the sports bike market, bought a 49 per cent stake in his firm. Boosted by the Milwaukee giant's resources and marketing expertise, the renamed Buell Motorcycle Company continued to expand – and now its bikes are being exported to Britain for the first time.

The most striking of the four-bike range (all are closely related, differing only in bodywork and some chassis parts) is the Si Lightning, a lean, mean, aggressively styled roadster. With its big Harley V-twin engine and tiny seat and tail section, the barrel-chested Buell makes rivals such as Ducati's Monster look positively tame.

Like all Buell's previous models, the Lightning holds an aircooled, 45-degree Harley V-twin engine in a tubular steel frame that incorporates Buell's unique system of rubber mounts and

rods to control vibration. In another traditionally quirky piece of Buell design, the rear shock absorber sits horizontally below the engine. It works by being pulled, rather than squeezed in conventional fashion, by a linkage



Erik Buell put the thunder in the Lightning, top

PHOTOGRAPHS ROLAND BROWN

right knee, is equally large and unattractive. But their size is necessary to allow the 1,203cc V-twin engine, borrowed from Harley's Sportster cruiser, to breathe more freely. Along with some mild tuning, the result is an output of 86hp – an increase of 50 per cent.

This gives the Lightning straight-line performance in a different league to that of the Sportster or any other Harley. First impressions are not promising: the Buell shakes at low revs while making a disappointing chugging sound through that efficient exhaust system. But once the V-twin reaches 4,000rpm it magically smooths almost completely – and a flick of throttle sends the bike hurtling forward with a thrilling burst of acceleration.

Anyone used to riding a standard Sportster would find it difficult to believe that the Lightning is powered by essentially the same engine, so smoothly and enthusiastically does the Buell surge towards its top speed of about 130mph. With a fairly upright riding position and only a tiny flyscreen to keep off the wind, the Buell is not ideally suited to long-distance cruising at speed. But the bike's broad spread of power means it is very easy to ride. Just flick the throttle and it responds, requiring minimal use of Harley's rather crude five-speed gearbox.

Handling is excellent, combining high-speed stability with light, easy steering and a firm, well-controlled ride from the sophisticated suspension. At 193kg the Lightning is fairly light. Its

upside-down front forks and fat sticky sports tyres combine to give plenty of control in the bends, and the front brake, a huge single 340mm disc gripped by an American-made six-piston caliper, is very powerful.

As a quick, fine-handling bike with traffic-stopping looks, the Lightning has plenty of appeal, but it is not without the odd fault. That big airbox gets in the way of a tall rider's knee, and its tiny seat very soon becomes uncomfortable. But Harley-Davidson's involvement has allowed more freedom to specify parts such as handlebar grips and controls, which are conventional sports bike items instead of the unsuitable cruiser parts that Buell used previously.

More to the point, Harley's investment and marketing clout has this year led to the Buell range going on sale outside America for the first time. In this country, bikes are available from 10 leading Harley dealers, with the Lightning costing £8,995 and the top-of-the-range SST Thunderbolt Touring – which combines this bike's engine and chassis with a full fairoid and luggage panniers – selling for £10,495.

For motorcyclists looking for a distinctive and exciting roadster, the Buell Si Lightning is well worth considering. For Erik Buell, now head of a well-financed firm, building bikes with his name on the tank for a fast-expanding market, the Harley tinkerer's fantasy-made-real shows no sign of ending.

Only a light smoker

The French have done their bit to make diesel cars socially acceptable in a market ruled by image and snobbery. Spurred on by the availability of cheap fuel in France (but not here), the Peugeot/Citroën (PSA) combine has been at the forefront of the diesel revolution. Without compromising economy – the *raison d'être* of the compression-ignition engine invented by Dr Rudolf Diesel at the turn of the century – PSA has helped nurture the diesel to respectability by raising performance and refinement to levels once thought unattainable.

There is, however, no room for complacency. Admirable though its efforts have been, the French giant has seen its stalwart mid-range oil burner slip recently from pacemaker to also-ran. The long-serving eight-valve 1.9 turbo was (and remains) adequate for cars such as the lower-medium Peugeot 306 and Citroën ZX, but something bigger and better was required for the Citroën Xantia and Peugeot 406 if PSA was to retain its competitive edge against super-frugal new rivals like VW's direct-injection Passat TDi. Enter a new 12-valve 2.1 turbo-diesel to supplement (not replace) the 1.9.

Small though it is, the increase in capacity of 183cc makes a big difference when paired with new free-breathing valvetrain – the lungs of an engine, petrol or diesel. The more life-giving oxygen goes in, the greater the performance. Power has been increased over the 1.9's by 20 per cent, torque (the muscle behind the turbo-diesel's strong midrange acceleration) by 25 per cent. It shows. Put your foot down and the 2.1 Xantia leaps forward with a vigour that surprises diesel-despising petrolheads. There is nothing tardy about this car's punchy performance. The 2.0 petrol Xantia is quicker all out to 60 mph from rest, but so what? From, say, 30 to 50mph in third – a typical overtaking burst – the diesel wins hands down.

Cold starting is accompanied by the usual pinky clatter but not the belch of dirty smoke that's evident from the exhaust of my Peugeot 1.9 D Turbo. PSA's new diesel runs cleaner than the old. Once under way, the engine emits a deep drone that is neither intrusive nor unpleasant. Indeed, high gearing gives a long-legged motorway

gait that the cheaper petrol 2.0 cannot match. Contrary to popular belief, diesels with a decent turn of speed come into their own on long runs, not bustling around town.

If you want a traditional estate rather than a trendy monospace people carrier, the elegant Xantia is as good as they come at this level. Space and practicality are great strengths. Gas/oil suspension, self-levelling, gas/oil suspension that, at the pull of a lever, can be raised (for traversing rough tracks) or lowered (to facilitate loading) is ideally suited to a family holdall capable of carrying 600kg. No sagging tail here when the flat, unobstructed cargo deck is heavily laden. Suspension is also very

supple, so the car rides smoothly on poor roads.

In its handling, the VSX on test was pleasant rather than uplifting. Delicacy is needed to work the fully powered brakes without jerking heads, though changing gear seamlessly calls for no special skill. To corner with spirit is to expose joll and lurch that the front seats still do little to counter, despite recent improvements. The driving position would suit more people if the cushion could be tilted and the steering wheel pulled out. Nice touches abound, though, including remote audio controls on the steering wheel, and no-nonsense air conditioning which operates when the heater regulator is set to blue.

ROAD TEST Citroën Xantia Estate

By Roger Bell



CITROËN XANTIA 2.1 TD VSX ESTATE

Specifications
Citroën Xantia 2.1 TD VSX estate, £20,765 on the road (2.1 TD hatchback from £17,645). Engine: 2088cc, four cylinders, 12 valves, 110bhp at 4300rpm; five-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive, performance: top speed 115mph (117 saloon), 0-60mph in 10.8sec (10.4 saloon), combined fuel consumption 39.8mpg.

Rivals
Peugeot 406 2.1 DT GLX estate, £19,005. New 406 holdall of traditional design replaces old 405 estate. Same engine as Citroën Xantia, but extra weight blunts (still lively) performance. Roomy, comfortable and pleasant to drive.

Renault Laguna 2.2TD RXE
estate, £20,305. For more before beauty. Square-tailed Laguna not so stylish as Citroën but marginally roomier, more versatile. Advantages include split tailgate and optional extra seats. Ride and handling well on conventional suspension, little in it for performance and economy.

Volvo V40 1.9td estate
£19,820. Not Volvo's traditional box-on-wheels estate but an elegant five-door sharing Renault's Cabriolet underpinnings. Turbo-diesel (same price as much faster five-cylinder 2.0 petrol) is elderly Renault unit. Good economy, indifferent performance. Ride and handling fall short of class benchmarks.

Long distance cars can be better by miles

When Olivia Katherine Ruppert arrived blinking into the world in April, I was prepared. In the hospital car park was her first car – and only the best would do. I wanted the safest model I could buy, with air conditioning, a huge boot to take all the baby paraphernalia, a smooth automatic gearbox and easy-to-clean leather upholstery. However, to buy

Six figures is only the beginning, James Ruppert says as he slips comfortably into his used Saab

the ultimate baby carriage new would cost a small fortune. The Saab 9000 S1 chose cost over £21,000 when it was new in 1991, yet more than five years later I paid less than a quarter of that. The biggest contributory factor to the low

price were the 115,000 recorded miles. That is because used car buyers and sellers have a simple creed: low mileage good, high mileage bad. They couldn't be more wrong. High-mileage cars are

in much better mechanical condition than their sickly low-mileage counterparts. Since 1970 the average life of a car has effectively doubled. Once upon a time 50,000 miles signalled the end of a vehicle's viable existence. Now is the

time rather than the exception for a car to reach a six-figure mileage without any major breakdowns. Improved production techniques, finer engineering tolerances, improved anti-corrosion treatments and the use of galvanised steel have all undoubtedly helped. However, it is still up to the owners to do their bit.

At Stevens & Stevens, a small independent Volkswagen and Audi garage in east London, they look after dozens of high-mileage business cars and low-mileage shopping and school run hatchbacks. They know the secret: "regular servicing".

Well they would say that wouldn't they? But they should know. "Short journeys are the worst," Mr Stevens said. "The engine does not have time to reach its proper working temperature and that dramatically shortens its life. The key is clean oil. Once it turns black on the dipstick it is not doing its job properly. Low mileage cars really ought to have their oil changed every 3,000 to 5,000 miles."

There are other considerations. "Locally-used cars also tend to pick up a lot more minor damage in the supermarket car park and wear out clutches and gearboxes much more quickly. A well looked after car which has covered big motorway distances over a few years is always going to be the better-used vehicle."

That made me feel much more confident about my Saab, which had averaged around 25,000 miles a year. The service history was comprehensive, detailing every oil change and overhaul over the previous five years. Any lingering doubts about longevity were dispelled when I dropped the car into my local specialist for a pre-purchase check.

I drove away in a service-loan Saab 9000 that had quar-

ter of a million miles on the clock. Admittedly it felt slightly loose, like a comfortable old jacket, yet there was no need for elbow patches, or a new lining just yet. There were no serious rattles, squeaks, or lack of power from the still quite eager two-litre engine.

Clearly, some cars can take the punishment better than others. It is hard to generalise, but the vast majority of high-mileage survivors are German or Swedish.

At the 1995 London Motor Show Volkswagen UK displayed a seasoned engine that had covered 500,000 miles in a Golf with no discernible wear. One VW customer, David Langley, sailed past the half-million-mile mark some time ago in a 1985 Passat 1.8. He wants to reach a million.

A Porsche specialist, Michael Teichurst, has no hesitation in buying high-mileage examples to resell. "Frankly at 80,000 miles, plus they have only just been run in. They perform better and are much more reliable. Ultra-low mileage examples deteriorate faster. The engine bores dry out and get damaged when restarted, and they can be complete nightmares if they have been parked in a garage for any length of time."

Ben Berry of Saaben, a specialist in used Saabs, says: "In the trade, everyone knows that high-mileage, open road cars are in better shape than their low-mileage town-driven counterparts. And they are always thousands of pounds cheaper." So the next time you see a used car advertisement stating "one owner, genuine low mileage" stop reading and seek out the line in another ad that reads "high mileage, hence low price".

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Can pay, will pay

More and more mortgages are being taken out by women. Nic Cicutti takes a look at what lenders are offering them

Despite the continuing drive by lenders to win prospective homebuyers to their sophisticated range of mortgage products, they have traditionally tended to ignore one potential group of borrowers - women.

The reason for such an "oversight" owes much to the traditional view of women's role in society. Until recently, they have always tended to be seen as secondary figures in the mortgage-lending game.

They were regarded as passive partners to the men in their lives, who took responsibility for choosing the right mortgage, associated financial trimmings and then paid the bills.

Such views no longer hold water. More women are in work than ever before.

Moreover, within the next 10 years, the proportion of women aged between 25 and 35 in work is expected to increase to 81 per cent, up 10 percentage points on the situation today. Women's pay is rising as a proportion of men's, albeit slowly, from 63 per cent in 1979 to more than 72 per cent today.

Aside from income, the increased importance of women within the mortgage market comes from changes in general living patterns.

Fionnuala Earley, a senior economist at the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML), points out: "Higher levels of further education provide greater opportunity for financial inde-

pendence and the ability to set up home alone at an earlier age."

This, coupled with a growing tendency for women to get married and to have children later in life, means they are more likely to be seeking a mortgage, particularly now that the housing recession seen in the past few years appears to be over.

Ms Earley adds: "There has also been an increased incidence of divorce, which has added to the numbers of households headed by women. [Estimates] suggest this will continue in the future, with the percentage of divorced women expected to increase to 14 per cent by 2020, compared to only 7 per cent in 1992."

Figures from mortgage lenders themselves underline the growing importance of women as borrowers. Last year, 16 per cent of all mortgages were made to women on their own, compared to 8 per cent in 1983.

Figures from the recent *Survey of English Housing* show that while women, who tend to earn less than men, pay a greater proportion of their income towards their mortgages, they are also less likely to default on payments. Eighteen per cent of men found it hard to meet their mortgage payments, compared with 11 per cent of women.

While most mortgage lenders accept, at least at face value, the growing role of women in the mortgage market, the key question is one of whether specific packages need to be designed for women on their own.

Charles Crouch, a Woolwich spokesman, says: "We do not discriminate between men and women in our mortgage lending. All our loans are available to males and females on equal terms. Generally, there does not appear to be any difference in the type of loan taken out by single men or women."

"One area where we do look specifically at women's needs is where we are considering applications from women who are pregnant. If an application is made by someone who is about to have a child, providing they are going back to work, we are prepared to take their income into account at the assessment stage if they are planning to go back to work. We would want to know that they are on proper maternity leave, though."

Perhaps as significant as single women buying their own home is the significant tendency for today's mortgages to be based on the joint earnings of couples taking out a loan.

Ms Earley says: "It is important to remember that increased economic activity among women will also have had an effect on their contribution to joint mortgages."

"Even where the mortgage is in the sole name of a male partner, the female income may be an important factor in the household."

"[This] has important implications for the mortgage market. The ability to manage payments is now more likely to be sensitive to female income and job prospects."

"Consequently, some lenders may be genuinely concerned about the ability of couples to continue to meet mortgage payments should they decide to start a family."

In the past two years, dozens of lenders have launched so-called "flexible" mortgages, based on the premise that borrowers should be allowed to take payment "holidays" for periods of up to nine months. In other cases, payments can be scaled down or increased at will, depending on circumstances.

Mr Crouch says: "These days, more and more mortgages are taken out with two rather than one income and either party could stop work."

"We designed our FlexiMortgage to enable borrowers to have repayment breaks for whatever reason. If a woman gets pregnant it's not necessarily her that takes time off, we do get role reversals."

"The opportunity is there, whatever the circumstances."

Despite the trend towards greater lending equality, lending experts warn that there is still a need for women to take several additional factors into account.

Alan Mudd, sales manager at John Charcol, the UK's largest mortgage broker, says: "If women buy on their own, particularly where they are borrowing up to the limit of their earnings, they should make sure they can afford the mortgage if interest rates go up. This can be painful if a woman has taken out a discount or fixed-rate mortgage."

"They should consider carefully the type of loan they take. For those who are cautious, repayment mortgages may be the best option. Also, women tend to be less fascinated by the prospect of endless DIY than many men. They should be prepared to get a far more detailed valuation or survey of the property to ensure there are no hidden problems with it."

"If they are buying property with a partner, they should always take out a joint tenancy or tenancy in common should they split up at a later date."

One potentially frightening experience for many women is that of meeting the full cost of a mortgage when their relationship ends.

Mr Mudd adds: "The advice we would give is that in a dispute with a co-borrower you should immediately advise the lender of developments. The more information they have the more sympathetic they will be."

Although Mr Mudd opposes specific marketing aimed at women, he agrees with the argument for more flexibility to take women's needs into account. "When you consider that a home is often the greater part of the borrower's personal wealth, providing something that meets people's needs, whether men or women, ought to be the aim of any mortgage lender."

MoneyFacts, a monthly guide to investment and mortgage rates, also carries a list of flexible mortgages. For subscription details, call 01692 500765.



Three to view Berkshire



The Cedars, a Georgian house a mile to the east of Ascot, stands in magnificent formal gardens and grounds of more than 16 acres. One of the main features of the property is the views across open countryside. The house has an elegant entrance and staircase halls, a formal drawing room with an extended bay leading to the west terrace, panelled dining hall and sitting room, study, kitchen and large breakfast room. On the first floor is a master bedroom suite, four further bedrooms and two further bathrooms. Adjoining the house is an indoor swimming pool complex with French windows to the gardens. The asking price is £3,000,000 through Knight Frank (0171-629 8171) and Savills (0171-499 8644).



The five-bedroom "Avon" house, which starts at £210,000, is one of the six styles Swan Hill Homes is building on its 80-acre development at Caversham, adjacent to protected countryside. The homes have fully fitted kitchens, fitted wardrobes in most bedrooms and the master bedroom comes with its own shower room. The current phase of 80 homes in 15 acres is almost sold. Prices for family houses start at £156,950. All have good size gardens. Swan Hill Homes (01734 464811).



Barn House at Littlewick Green is in a rural spot, yet just three miles from Maidenhead station and three from the M4. It forms the major portion of a range of converted period buildings to the side of a lane. The main house comprises three bedrooms, bathroom, dressing room/shower room, three reception rooms and a kitchen/breakfast room. The annex, which could be incorporated within the main house, has two bedrooms, bathroom, reception room and kitchen. Outside there is a separate brick and tile garage with a studio above. The walled garden is well stocked. It is for sale through John D Wood (0171-493 4106).

Penny Jackson

Last week in this column the pictures of Hill Farm, near Shepton Mallet, and Middle Littleton Manor, near Stratford-upon-Avon appeared alongside the wrong captions. The actor Rob Heyland's house near Evesham, Worcestershire is being sold by R.A. Bennett & Partners (01386 852456) and Cluttons (01749 678012) are selling actor Jeffrey Holland's home in Somerset.

A growing investment

A landscaped garden can add pleasure, and value, to a home. But spend your money wisely, warns Penny Jackson

Walk into a £300,000 house in Battersea, south London, and the chances are that the garden will be no more than a scrappy backyard, partly concreted, with a couple of roses and the odd shrub in the narrow beds. It is not that buyers are put off - far from it - but the dramatic leap in house prices in this area seems to have left the gardens in a noticeably lower league. Expectations of imaginative design and borders bursting with life may rarely be met, but are twice as welcome when they are.

"When I do walk round and see a little pergola or a well-thought out shady area, it's a tremendous relief," Giles Underhill of Foxtons estate agents says. "Anything to break the monotony of the 95 per cent of houses that have a 25-foot paved backyard with a 12-inch border round three sides."

He is beginning to see a change, though. "If you live in a house that was until recently worth £150,000, the garden might not have mattered. Now that property has gone up in value so much people are beginning to look over the garden fence."

However, anyone tempted by cheap, untried landscape gardeners should regard the plight of one new Battersea resident. She turned to the gardening pages of this newspaper for advice about

the wasteland of a garden she had acquired that had clearly been "designed" by a cowboy operator.

Landscape gardeners do not come cheaply, but for anyone who feels daunted by their urban patch, professional advice can save time and money, even if its only an hour's consultation. Those going the whole hog will have to budget for thousands of pounds. The garden tends to come pretty low down the list of most people's spending priorities, despite the general rule of thumb that we should be prepared to spend as much on hard-landscaping as on the kitchen. When selling a property, the £10,000 spent on worktops and cupboards is no more likely to be returned pound for pound than the outlay on paving stones in the garden. Yet the overall effect and pleasure of living with good-quality workmanship in the garden is immeasurable.

Mark Harrison of Aspen Landscape Designers and Gardeners is adamant about the importance of good paving and fencing, however limited the budget might be. "If you can't afford York stone, then don't go for something that simply imitates it. The common grey street paver can be transformed if it is set in a grid of brickwork and that will be a third of the price."

Given that Londoners, for example, are neurotic about the state of shared fencing, someone prepared to foot the cost of a brick wall would be a dream neighbour.

If this is too much to hope for and the cost of creating a walled garden is beyond financial reach, then at least stay away from the revolting yellow panels, says Mr Harrison. "A close boarded fence with arched rails is always worth the investment. Custom-made trellises are wonderful. A London garden might set you back £3,000, but the effect can be sensational."

So can you spend too much on your garden? No one can cost the pleasure it brings but it is no good expecting to see the money back. Marc Goldberg of Hamptons International, Hampstead, is selling a three-bedroom house which has had £30-£40,000 spent on the garden. It has been excavated, terraced, lawns laid by a top designer and is a spectacular small space. However no buyer in this sector will spend anything like that amount extra for it.

However, at the top end of the market, such expenditure would be entirely appropriate. "Professionally landscaping any property in north London worth more than £500,000 would not be a false investment, providing it is in keeping with the house," Marc Goldberg says.

James Wilkinson of Winkworth recalls a house in Muswell Hill where a fortune had been spent on creating a three-



Pot pourri: variety and quality are essential ingredients of a good garden, say Aspen Landscape Design

KEITH DOBNEY

theme garden. "The first part was English with lawns and roses, the middle French with shingle paths, and the back Italian with gazebos, white statuary and tinkling water. The house had the same attention to detail and was a bit twee for most people."

Indeed any designer worth his or her

salt should take a good look at the house before suggesting what to do with the garden. And what that says about all those of us with sagging fences topped with ill-matching trellis, is anyone's guess. But solid posts in the garden are as good a clue as any as to how well a house might have been maintained. However much has

been spent on a garden, the only thing that reaps real dividends and costs next to nothing is improvement of the soil. "Mulch, not money" is the message from gardeners.

Aspen 0171-228 2942; Society of Garden Designers 0181-974 9483

Once you get started on a subject, it sometimes takes more effort than you thought to get off it. So it is with the issue of unit trust performance. This week, I propose to add some more thoughts on the subject, picking up where I left off last Saturday and adding some new advice from another source.

I mentioned last week some statistical research by an academic at Sheffield University, John Cuthbert, which attempts to cast light on which fund management houses have the best overall track records in the last few years.

He highlighted 11 firms which had demonstrated consistently value-added performance over three-year periods with the majority of their funds. I should emphasise that these covered general UK equity funds only, and not specialist sector funds (eg property, technology and so on) or international equity funds.

The figures on international equity funds are just as interesting as the UK ones. Mr Cuthbert found that only 11 unit trust providers in the last three years consistently beaten the relevant

market index over the last three years with more than three out of five of their funds. (To narrow the field, he only included those firms which had at least four international equity funds in their portfolio.)

The firms that did the best on this measure were Prudential, Norwich Union, Fidelity, St James Capital, Scottish Widows, Cazenove, Provident Mutual, NatWest, Scottish Equitable, Mercury Asset Management and Edinburgh Fund Managers. Two things are immediately striking.

One is that there is hardly any overlap at all between this list of consistent houses and those for the UK equity sector. Not one of the top 10 names in the UK list appeared in the international one. This is partly because some of the best UK fund managers do not have enough overseas funds to qualify for the screening – an honourable mention to Lazard's here, which has five equity funds (UK and international), all of which have consistently beaten the market over the last three years. Britannia and Jupiter both



Jonathan Davis

To pick one unit trust from 1,600 you need to do your homework

boost a 50 per cent strike rate with their international funds and 100 per cent records with their UK funds.

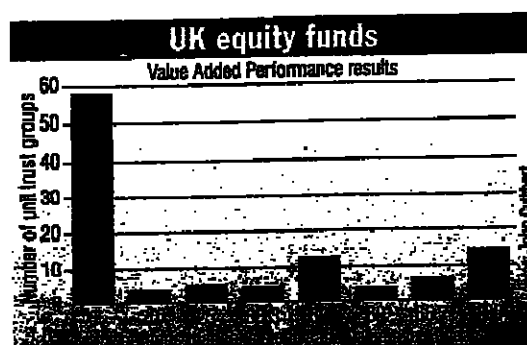
But in many of the cases, the performance simply does not seem to travel well. Several of the consistent international performers, including Prudential, Norwich Union and Edinburgh Fund Managers, have no funds at all which consistently outperform in the UK market.

The second striking thing is that many of the consistent performers with international funds are insurance companies, organisations that are traditionally – for both good and bad reasons – not associated with outstanding

investment performance. And who would have thought that one would find a clearing bank in such a list?

Mr Cuthbert's conclusion reinforces his general argument that there is something of a revolution going on in the way that the management of unit trusts is organised. He singles out Cazenove and Lazard for their success in developing a discipline in their asset allocation process which enables them to share ideas across the various teams managing funds in different regions.

He reiterates his point that the kind of changes taking place in the investment management process in many cases makes past



can be attributed to the skill of the fund manager with more or less absolute confidence. These are Johnson Fry Slater Growth, Jupiter Income, Jupiter UK Growth, NPI UK Special Opportunities, Perpetual UK Growth and Schroder UK Enterprise. Another five funds can be said with 80 per cent confidence to pass the "skill, not luck" test.

It is no surprise that these funds include several where the fund manager is willing, or even encouraged, to take big bets against the market consensus. You would not expect funds managed by a conservative institutional fund manager, or someone like the Pru, to feature in this kind of list. They are rare birds.

For those who are really interested in how to go about picking a unit trust from the 1,600 or so that are available, and are prepared to read nearly 300 pages on the subject, I can recommend a new book, *Picking The Right Unit Trust*, by Douglas McWilliams (FT Pitman Publishing, £21.99). This is well laid out, with plenty of easy-to-follow illustrations, and sensible advice from professionals in the field.

Having gone through all the reasons why reliance on the performance figures you read in the advertisements is of only limited value, his main conclusion is that ordinary investors should aim for funds that have consistent track records of above-average performance (not necessarily the very best), coupled with low volatility. If they cannot do the calculations themselves, best to pay a good IFA, with access to ratings services such as Micropal or Fund Research, for advice.

This is broadly sensible, although in my view Mr McWilliams' technique for picking such funds errs rather on the mechanistic side. (He does have a good chapter on the merits of index tracking funds, however.)

As Bill Mott of Crédit Suisse, who runs one of the top performing funds at one of the best unit trust houses, unhelpfully points out in the book: "There are no rules. People who try to get investment advice expect it to be like accountancy. But the investment world is constantly changing." And so it is on the fund management side too, as Mr Cuthbert has usefully reminded us.

Fund of funds: Rachel Fixsen on how to diversify investments in a single unit trust

Live dangerously – put all your money in the shares of one company. If your nerves aren't quite up to that, you could spread your risk by buying part of an investment fund. And for the truly cautious, there are always funds of funds.

Funds of funds are a breed of unit trust. Instead of investing in shares or bonds directly, they hold units of other unit trusts. The idea is that by buying units of a fund of funds, you spread your risk much more widely than most unit trusts can. Through this collection of collective funds, you could divide your money between 20 times more stocks and bonds than in a single unit trust.

Many fund management groups, such as Gartmore and M&G, run at least one fund of funds alongside their more directly invested unit trusts. Some buy from any unit trust available, while others stick to the group's own unit trusts. One drawback of in-house funds of funds is that the fund managers have far less choice. They could end up having to invest in unit trusts with mediocre performance prospects just to get the maximum diversification.

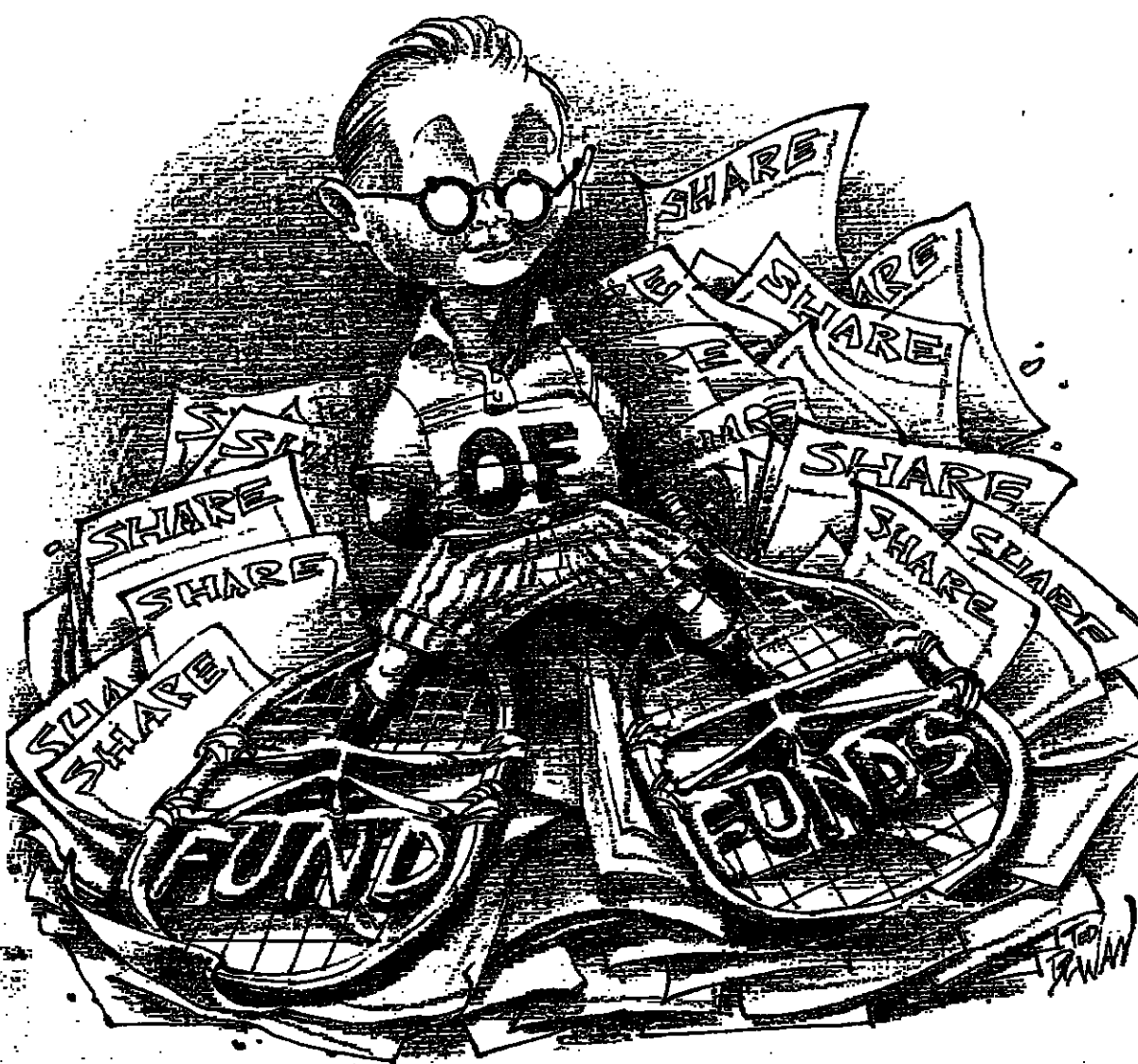
Some funds of funds invest broadly across all types of unit trust, while others are confined to one sector – emerging markets, for example.

Two companies manage nothing but funds of funds – Pilgrim Unit Trust Management and Portfolio Fund Management. Each firm manages six funds, with most of them specialised rather than being broader-based.

Portfolio was set up as a public operation in 1994, beginning by taking one fund public, the Portfolio Fund of Funds, which had been a private fund since 1989. It now has around £70m under management. Out of 31 funds in the broad funds of funds sector over the past five years it has been the star performer, according to *Moneyfacts*, the financial information provider. A £1,000 investment five years ago would have ballooned to £2,099.19. But over the past year, comparative performance has waned to place the fund 37th out of 81.

"We're giving to the small investor the possibilities that only big investors usually have," says Tim Miller, chief executive of Portfolio and former marketing guru of M&G. If you invested directly in shares, you would need huge sums to get a really high level of diversification.

For people buying PEPs, funds of



Safety in numbers

funds were the sixth most popular type of fund in April, according to the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds. Over £111m of units in funds of funds were sold in the month.

One problem, however, is that fees can be higher than with other types of unit trusts because of possible double-charging. If the fund manager has to pay all the fees due to each unit trust it invests in, these soon mount up.

However, Mr Miller says Portfolio is able to keep this snag to a minimum by economies of scale. "We very rarely have to pay initial charges and we get rebates on annual charges." Nevertheless, you can expect to pay on average an extra 1 per cent in charges.

Funds of funds theoretically escape the worst falls other unit trusts suffer,

but of course you pay for this safety net by missing out on spectacular gains.

"Performance is not sparkling by any stretch," says Bryan Fisher, independent financial adviser at Berkeley Financial Planning in Coventry.

In the sector, Berkeley has recommended the Britannia Managed Portfolio, which has produced an annual rate of return of 15.7 per cent over the past five years. The Morgan Grenfell Managed Income fund has also been recommended, and has yielded 14.9 per cent over the same period, he says.

Mr Fisher says that personally he is not a fan of funds of funds, although he accepts that they are suitable in certain circumstances. "If you're building up a portfolio, you might put some money into them to create a balance.

"But it's much easier to spread your money around a bit among the unit trusts ... to create a portfolio of the better unit trusts, rather than putting it into a fund of funds, and accept the higher charges," Mr Fisher says.

However, for big investors there is a tax advantage. Each time you switch your money from one unit trust to another you have to pay capital gains tax. But transactions within one unit trust are free of this tax.

Funds of funds with their safety-first image are often seen as ideal first-time investments. But Mr Miller says demand comes from the very wealthy. "As people become richer, it becomes more important for them to preserve what they have ... the richer you are, the more cautious you are."

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Warranting closer attention

Warrant prices are also affected by extra considerations. These include the lifespan of the investment itself up to the final exercise date. The longer the

Another factor affecting potential profits is the "premium" at which a warrant is sold - this is the difference between the exercise price plus the cost of the warrant itself, compared to the current price of the underlying share. The higher the premium, the higher the element of risk may be.

One major area of choice for would-be warrant investors lies in investment trusts, where they have generated an average return of 21.55 per cent, against a 9.58 per cent average rise in investment trust share prices and gains of 9.46 per cent from the FTSE All Share index and 13.94 per cent

However, warrant prices remain depressed, partly due to continuing worries over the outlook for the market. Williams de Broe, the

stockbroker firm, points out that for investors worried about the potential of a downswing in UK stocks many investment trusts show a strong bias towards international markets and smaller company sectors, with emerging markets taking up £160m of the £600m market and European sector warrants a further £102m.

Many investment trusts now carry no premium, in some cases even a discount to their underlying share price, making it unprofitable to exercise the right to buy. Equally, investors can buy "geared" exposure at less than the value of the under-

Clearly, there are opportunities for canny speculators, although any choices need to be carefully made. For most savers, this will not be an area in which they will want to risk their shirt.

the majority of their assets in unit and investment trusts, who have also invested in far safer Tensas and similar funds, a small warrant punt is an option.

As in all such cases talking to a good investment adviser is critical. The wrong

decision could mean losing a lot more than with traditional investments. Getting things right, on the other hand, could leave you quids in.

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Return of the saints

Young suits are buying the Old Masters, writes John Windsor

The saints are marching in. They have left their caves and rocky prominences to offer themselves on the blocks of London's bumper summer auctions of Old Master paintings in the first week of July.

It isn't easy being a saint, especially a miserable or a gory one. Although today's newly rich young suits have rediscovered Old Masters - wall-fillers for the respectable Nineties - saintly supplicants are more likely to find salvation in heaven than the saleroom.

British buyers favour the secular and the decorative - big, classical Italian landscapes with frolicking fat nymphs whose nudity becomes more amusing as the dinner party wears on, and colourful, meticulously painted Dutch flower or bird paintings.

Nobody wanted the 18th century Roman School painting of the poncey praying Saint Charles Borromeo, even at £800-£1,200, in Christie's South Kensington's April sale. But in the same sale, a big (66in by 97in) fleshy frolic by a follower of Rubens, *Diana and Actaeon*, a bathing scene showing Diana's blushing attendants covering themselves from the prurient gaze of Actaeon, fetched £18,400, above the £10,000-£15,000 estimate.

Followers of? Not the real thing, then? Of course not. But do not let that put you off. Such works are not fakes, more like honest tributes. Although they may fetch only a tenth the price of fully attributed Old Masters, their quality can transcend the decorative.

A "sub-Canaletto" (tongue-in-cheek auctioneers' jargon) of the *Doge's Palace in Venice* by Michele Marieschi (1710-43) - it does help the price if the follower's name is known - fetched £1,541,500 at Christie's in December, a record for the artist.

Another sub-Canaletto of Venice, by an unnamed follower, is estimated at £4,000-£6,000 in Bonhams' July sale.

If City slickers and interior decorators spent their hols tramping round museums in Naples, researching the 17th century paintings of Vaccaro or Stanzione of the Caravaggio School, you could expect London auction prices to reflect a more scholarly taste.

But the tired whizz-kids hole up instead in their villas in Tuscany and continue to demand easy, decorative Old Masters when they get back. Their money is as good as anybody else's. One of the primary rules of investment: buy what everybody else is buying.

Caroline Oliphant of Bonhams says: "Some people get frightened off by Old Masters. They think they are difficult and that they need to know a lot about them. But it is possible to appreciate many of them without knowing a great deal."

Fortunately, the London auction market in Old Masters is still dominated by dealers rather than private speculators.

That makes it more stable than, say, the contemporary art market. Old Masters are traditionally the



Big and bold: 'Diana and Actaeon' fetched £18,400 in a sale at Christie's in April

market's sheet-anchor: slow to respond to market trends.

Italian black money created a small price surge three years ago, following a dignified decline in response to the crash of 1989-90. The sharper surge of the past couple of years is more probably due to new buyers, the dinky couples to be seen being shepherded round pre-sale views by auctioneers, than to outright speculators.

This summer, as last summer, the response to the surge in demand has been fat, spine-cracking auction catalogues offering

plenty of pickings for bargain hunters in the £4,000-£6,000 price range - the popular price for followers' paintings capable of amusing your friends.

Such sudden overstocking is a familiar art-market phenomenon. It is governed by principles quite different from the incremental, day-to-day price movements of the equity or housing markets.

As soon as art prices dip, vendors tend not to consign and auctions become understocked.

As soon as prices rise, vendors tend to bring everything in - especially into the big annual summer sales. The result is glut: a buyer's market.

But this summer's proliferation of Old Masters could be your last chance to snap up nice pieces easily.

Sotheby's, which got away only 61 per cent of its big, 309-lot summer sale last year (75 per cent is considered acceptable for Old Masters) has learned the lessons of overstocking and has jettisoned 100 lots from this year's sale, leaving only 275. Those saints must be crying their eyes out.

Sotheby's Alex Bell says: "In summer, 1,000 lots or so in the £4,000-£6,000 price range throughout London is just too much for people to absorb, whether dealers or private. At views, I've watched people just walking past them."

"For vendors in this price range,

the summer is not as good as October or May." This is when lower-priced pictures are all there is to look at.

But Christie's South Kensington this summer is still gloriously overstocked with 510 lots. So wait until the end of the sale, when jaded dealers and privateers will have spent their money and gone for a drink, then bid for the big (50in by 60in) crude but impressive capriccio of a classical palace on a lake from the circle of Giovanni Ghisolfi (est £4,000-£6,000), or the lubricious *Young Man about to Surprise a Lady Sleeping by a Fire in an Interior* (guy wants sex after returning from pub) from the circle of Francois De Troy, £6,000-£8,000.

Will such titillating trifles have grown in value in 10 years' time?

The alternative is to go for scholarly offerings such as Sotheby's oil sketch by the 17th-18th century Dutchman Jan Van Cleve, of the virgin and child with saints - for an altarpiece that survives in Ghent. Estimate £5,000-£7,000. But watch it: the Dutch will be on your tail.

Forthcoming London Old Master auctions: Phillips, Tuesday 1 July (11am); Christie's South Kensington, Wednesday 2 July (10.30am); Sotheby's, Thursday 3 July (10.30am); Bonhams, Thursday 3 July (2pm); Christie's King Street, Friday 4 July (10.30am).

Chaotic effect of a splash in the sea

Stephanie Hawthorne looks at the disadvantages of the Pensions Act

Some 200,000 occupational schemes with 11 million members have more security as a result of the Pensions Act, drafted after the death of media tycoon Robert Maxwell and the disappearance of more than £400m of his employees' pension funds. But do the benefits of the Act outweigh the disadvantages? Many experts claim it provides better protection at the price of fewer benefits.

Paul Haines, investment director at pension specialists Sedgwick Noble Lowndes, says: "The three main outcomes [of the Act] have been the destruction of forests, the boosting of fees paid to lawyers and actuaries and the start of a whole-sale move from final-salary to money-purchase schemes."

It is ironic that one of the main effects of the Pensions Act is to expose more people to the risk of fluctuating stock markets as more employers switch to money-purchase. In the past two years Zeneca, Lloyds, Legal & General, Barclays, Philips and Glaxo Wellcome have shifted towards money-purchase, where savings rise or fall in line with the stock market. In final-salary schemes the ultimate pension is based on your years of service and guaranteed by your employer, who bears all the risks.

Sally Bridgeland, of the actuarial firm Bacon & Woodrow, compares pensions to the butterfly effect: "A single flitter escalates to cause a catastrophic weather system somewhere else in the world. Here, a splash in the ocean (Maxwell) has led to a flood of legislation in the pensions system. Today, actuaries are frantically helping pension scheme trustees batten down their hatches and reef their sails, ready for the storm. There are bound to be some shipwrecks."

Many pension scheme members know that the state pension system is also on the rocks so there will be a lot of pressure to put alternative pension arrangements in place for the future. But winding up old pension arrangements involves salvaging costs which usually come from the assets of the scheme.

And employers may want employees to meet the costs of building and running new schemes, which will leave less for their pension ben-

efits earned in the future. So, asks Ms Bridgeland: "Will this chaotic legislation protect the interests of members of occupational pensions?"

Richard Malone of Sedgwick Noble Lowndes forecasts that the new legislation may not be enough. When it fails, he says, "it will lead to more law, more regulations and more supervision and this will further undermine the commitment of some employers to pension provision when politicians are looking to them to pick up more of the burden."

Martin Slack of Lane Clark & Peacock hopes employers will retain their involvement in decently funded schemes: "It is naive to expect employees to make adequate savings on their own, even if their salaries were increased to reflect any reduction in employer provision."

It is difficult to quantify the cost of compliance. Keith Tennent, of Buck Consultants, a firm of actuaries, forecasts it will be 2 to 3 per cent of payroll costs. Inevitably, it will deter some employers from continuing such schemes.

Will the Pensions Act stop another Maxwell? No legislation can stop fraudulent or criminal activity. What the Act should do is to deter such activity and ensure that, should fraud happen, it will be identified much earlier, so that the effect can be mitigated and corrective action started much sooner.

One of the biggest failures of the Act is that it does not include any requirement for external/independent custody of the investments. Had a requirement for independent custody been in place in 1991, Maxwell may not have happened.

What should the next government do? We must have a radical simplification of the complicated rules governing pensions and tax concessions. There must also be a blueprint for long-term pension provision which is guaranteed to survive political change and our adversarial system of law-making.

But all those in work and who can must all take some personal responsibility. What is crucial to a prosperous retirement is the size of contribution and the length of savings term before retirement.

Stephanie Hawthorne is editor of 'Pensions World'



Following Canaletto: A view of Venice by an unnamed painter is expected to sell for £4,000 to £6,000 at Bonhams

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Looking to retire early: Tony Cullen PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW HASSON

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AGE: 48
OCCUPATION: Computer operations manager
PROBLEM: Tony works for an NHS Trust and his department is due to be outsourced (ie taken over by a private employer). Tony has the choice of taking a net redundancy payment of £32,000 now, or having his salary "protected", at £31,200 per annum for up to two years, followed by a substantial salary reduction to £19,200 a year.

The problem with the former option is that Tony feels his age may be a barrier to obtaining a reasonable new position, and the problem with the latter is that the protected salary may end as soon as his department is outsourced and, even if honoured, his income and standard of living will fall sharply afterwards.

Tony is single with no financial dependents. He has been in the NHS superannuation scheme since 1975 and is making additional voluntary contribution (AVC) payments to purchase extra years within the scheme. He recently remortgaged his property, choosing a variable rate, interest-only mortgage, supported by an existing low-cost endowment policy.

The protected salary could continue beyond the age of 50 even under the outsourcing, as long as complicated transfer of undertaking protection of employment (TUPE) regulations apply. Equally, they may not.

Financial makeover: Talk to your employer

THE ADVISER: Mark Stevens MSEA, of Membership Services Direct, independent financial advisers in Brentwood, Essex (01277 267000).

THE ADVICE: Tony had favoured the idea of taking the redundancy payment now, finding a temporary position until he reached age 50, and then drawing his pension benefits, making up any shortfall by taking an income from the invested redundancy money and, if necessary, renting out his house.

Tony had correspondence from the pension scheme administrators which showed his prospective benefits on retirement at age 50. However, research into the NHS scheme rules showed that taking benefits at age 50 without penalty is only possible if he is still employed by the NHS at the time.

Leaving before 50 means that benefits would be preserved until age 60. An important exception is in the case of serious ill health, when benefits can be drawn early, but Tony is fit and healthy.

If Tony's department is taken over then, as a result of specific legislative requirements, the new employer must effect a broadly com-

parable pension scheme for employees. The NHS scheme is a final salary arrangement (ie benefits relate to years in service and the level of salary when the pension is first taken).

Various changes in pensions law have made final salary schemes onerous to run, particularly for smaller employers. Tony's prospective employers may set up a money purchase pension where benefits depend on fund performance and annuity rates. Remember, the new scheme must be broadly comparable, not identical. If the link between salary and membership is broken, Tony's pension cannot be accurately predicted.

So, if Tony stays and is outsourced, the only prospect of retiring at age 50 would depend upon him transferring his guaranteed NHS pension into a possible new scheme, the details of which we can only guess at. Leaving the pension preserved with the NHS means he cannot start drawing it until he is 60. Neither route fits with Tony's requirements.

What happens if Tony takes the redundancy pay now? We know his pension will not start until age 60, but he will have £32,000 to invest. Tony has a current minimum income need of £700 per month after tax. Renting his property out should secure a net income of £600 per month, so a relatively modest withdrawal from his investment would cover his needs.

However, spending the next 12 years in

rented accommodation is hardly ideal, and the whole plan would start to collapse if Tony were unable to rent his own house or if mortgage costs escalated. Of course, a splendid new highly paid job would ease Tony's finances for now but, as he points out, such an employment may be wishful thinking and it still doesn't enable him to retire at 50.

The best approach may be to talk to the current employer. The best compromise would be for the NHS Trust to guarantee Tony a job until he reaches 50, in his current position until the outsourcing occurs, and then in some other appropriate position at the same (or reduced) pay. This will save the Trust having to make a redundancy payment and Tony should be prepared to give some form of undertaking that he will retire at 50. In the meantime, his pension will be enhanced by his extra two years in the scheme and by his continuing AVC payments.

If he reaches the age of 50 while still employed by the Trust and wants to retire, three options apply. Tony could do so, but face actuarial reductions in his pension for leaving early. He could be backed by the Trust, in which case it takes on board some of the costs of his early retirement. Or he could be made redundant, in which case the Trust would meet the full cost, without penalties, of an early retirement.

Big need not be better



Brian Tora

Smaller companies are unfairly missing out on the stock market action

Has the stock market gone mad? New highs were being posted on both sides of the Atlantic as the week progressed. The demand for financial assets has been as strong as ever and forecasters have been busy pencilling in even larger numbers for the year end.

But make no mistake - this is a very thin bull market. All the action is taking place in the bigger market capitalisation stocks. And that applies just as much in the States as here.

It is worth bearing in mind that the Dow Jones Industrial Average, which everyone still quotes, covers just 30 shares. In the old days, the bellwether for the UK market was the FT Industrial Ordinary Index. This had just 30 shares too, but it was replaced in terms of credibility by the Financial Times Actuaries All Share Index.

This was the one which fund managers knew was most representative of the market. Now it includes more than 700 shares and covers over 90 per cent of the London stock market by value.

More recently, the FTSE 100 Index has gained a credibility that is alarming. So many tracker funds are based upon this index that the possibility of inclusion is likely to attract buying interest and thus accelerate the process of moving into the UK's top 100 companies. The same thing happens in reverse. It creates an artificial environment which can influence the action of companies and distort the performance of a share.

It is interesting to contrast the performance of the FTSE 100 and the Actuaries All Share Index, which includes a large number of smaller companies. The FTSE is well in the lead. It is clear where the smart money has been going.

In the USA, Dow Jones has always been precious over the way in which its index is used, but competitors have not made the inroads that might have been expected. Derivatives are changing all that.

Linking a contract to an index has become a favoured way of betting on the market move or, for more considered investors, hedging an existing position. Even the mighty Dow Jones has had to bow to this pressure. Soon we will be trading contracts based on this, the oldest of all the world stock market indices. And as with the UK, the Dow Jones Industrial Average is outperforming the more broadly based indices.

Why should smaller companies be so out of favour? Small companies are the lifeblood of the market. The best of them turn into large

companies. The first problem is deciding just what constitutes a small company. I have colleagues who consider the cut-off point to be a £1bn market capitalisation. A market capitalisation of £1bn these days puts you firmly down into "Ibottise" - the second 250 shares quoted in London. Amazing to think you can be worth so much money but still be playing in the second division.

Quite why investors these days should be so focused upon the larger, more liquid stocks is not entirely clear. But with more investing power concentrated in the hands of major institutions, it is perhaps understandable that they like to deal in shares that they can easily acquire - and easily ditch again if they change their view. What it does do is throw up some considerable opportunities among smaller companies.

That small company shares can reward handsomely is evident, even if the indices do not suggest pursuing them is a profitable pastime. I only have to look at my portfolio on Sky to see what can be achieved.

Trailing my two competitors, it was clear that the route I was taking - responsibly buying typical private-client shares, FTSE 100 companies that everyone had heard of - was not paying off. Matthew and Justin concentrated on smaller issues and were knocking my performance into a cocked hat. A change of tack and I had soon caught them up, leaping into the lead at one stage. Indeed, one other portfolio reverted to blue chip holdings and started to lag the others. It was strange how what was actually happening did not seem to be borne out by the indices.

There are some small company funds around but they have not been doing too well of late. If you have your full allocation of the blue chips, then it is perhaps worth a speculation in one or two smaller companies direct.

This is a theme to which I will return, but in the meantime my tip for this week is Silvermines, a company to which Greig Middleton acts as a stockbroker. Do not be deceived by the name. The company operates in the field of electronics and electrical equipment. With the shares having fallen dramatically, the market capitalisation is less than £50m, but we think this understates the true value of the company. One to tuck away in larger, well-diversified portfolios.

Brian Tora is chairman of the Greig Middleton investment strategy committee and may be contacted on 0171-455 4000

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Nic Cicutti

Time is running out for Halifax shareholders who want to put their windfalls into a personal equity plan

Thousands of Halifax shareholders who have made belated decisions to ask for share certificates, or were simply confused by the wording in their guides, need to get their skates on. The flotation may seem like it only happened a few days ago. But there are barely 20 working days left for shareholders to use their certificates to PEP the shares. A similar story applies to prospective Woolwich and Norwich Union shareholders. If you want to PEP

elsewhere, read the form sent to you carefully and make sure that you apply for a certificate well within the 42-day deadline.

By the way, don't fall for the slightly terrifying wording in the Woolwich brochure and application, which threatens all sorts of dire consequences – including heavy administration charges in the event of loss, for those who opt for certificates. One might almost think that Woolwich (bless 'em) doesn't want us to ask for them.

I was phoned this week by a bank employee asking why I am always so cynical about the financial industry. He should ask Rose Shepherd, a 59-year-old saver with Alliance & Leicester, who invested £5,000 in the former building society's Gold Plus Account in 1990.

Shortly afterwards, the account was withdrawn and became "dormant". Rates were swiftly reduced until, earlier this year, her son discovered she had earned the grand sum of £40.29 interest annually, at a rate of about 0.8 per cent a year.

When he complained, the neo-bank said that lists of rates paid on its accounts are on display in all branches. To his objection that she suffers from impaired vision and hearing and can barely walk, A&L's written reply was a polite and verbose variant of "tough". At least we know how they make their profits: from helpless pensioners.

Holidaymakers are switching from travellers' cheques to credit and debit cards when going abroad, writes Nic Cicutti

The great summer exodus is on. More than 23 million people are expected to travel abroad for their holidays this year. In many cases funding their breaks from free share windfalls gifted by demutualising building societies.

Organising each holiday involves meticulous planning, from inoculations to sun tan lotions, to the right level of travel insurance. One of the key decisions travellers need to make is over holiday money.

The most common way of taking money abroad is by using travellers' cheques. These involve a handling charge when they are bought in the UK and another charge when they are exchanged abroad.

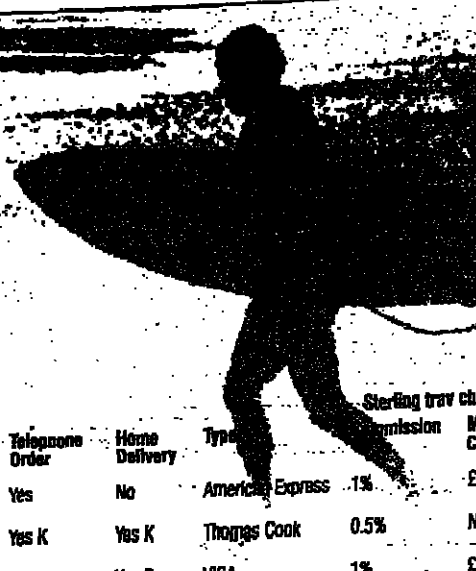
However, travellers' cheques are recommended if a journey covers several countries. Cheques, typically available under American Express or Thomas Cook liveries, have serial numbers and can be stopped if lost or stolen. Replacements are usually available within 24 hours. Before travelling abroad, write down the serial number of each cheque and the emergency number to call if lost or stolen. Leave the numbers with a relative or friend. Each cheque should only be countersigned when it is cashed in.

Some cash will always be needed at your destination. When abroad, either deposit most of your cash with the hotel safe, or distribute it within a range of places in your hotel room and luggage, carrying just the minimum with you.

Most banks and building societies will exchange cash and issue travellers' cheques for non-customers.

While it may pay to shop around, as our table shows, savings will only mount up when many hundreds of pounds are exchanged in one go.

Points to watch out for include the minimum charge if less than £200-£300 is being exchanged, whether a handling charge applies (most banks have now scrapped them) and the speed of response to an order.



	Non-customer	Telephone Order	Home Delivery	Type	Starting trav cheques	Commission	Min Charge	Foreign currency	Commission	Mile Charge	Handling Charge (per order)
Abbey National	No	Yes	No	American Express	1%	£1.25	1.5%	£1.25	£2		
Alliance & Leicester	Yes	Yes K	Yes K	Thomas Cook	0.5%	None	1.5%	None	£2	£5 home delivery	
Bank of Scotland	Yes	Yes	Yes D	VISA	1%	£3	1%	£3	None		
Barclays Bank	Yes	Yes	Yes A	VISA	1.5%	£3	2%	£3	£2.50		
Britannia	No	Yes	Yes	American Express	1%	£3	1%	£1.25	None		
Halifax	Yes	Yes	No	American Express	1%	£3	1%	£3	None		
Lloyds Bank	Yes	Yes	No	American Express	1%	£3	2%	£3	None		
Midland Bank	Yes	Yes	Yes C	Thomas Cook	1%	£3	2%	£3	£3.50		
Nationwide BS	No	Yes	Yes	Thomas Cook	1.5%	£3	1.5%	£3	£2.50		
NatWest Bank	Yes	Yes	No	American Express	1%	£4	1.5%	£2.50	£3.50 express		
Post Office Counters	Yes	No	No	American Express	1%	£2.50	1%	£2.50	None		
RB of Scotland	Yes	Yes	No	American Express	1%	£3	1.5%	£2 B	None		
Thomas Cook	Yes	Yes	Yes L	Thomas Cook	1%	£3	2%	£3	None		
TSB	Yes	Yes J	Yes J	Thomas Cook	1.5%	£3	1.5%	£3	None		
Woolwich BS	Yes	No	No	American Express	1%	£3	1.5%	£3	£2		

A = Premier cardholders only; B = £1 if order less than £200 equipment; C = Credit card holders only; D = If ordered through Post Office; E = Non-customer; F = Orders not taken by telephone; H = £11 plus 0.50% commission per currency; J = 75p per order and credit card holders only; K = £2.50 postage charge for home delivery; L = Alliance account holders only; M = Only through Thomas Cook direct on 01743 335525; N = Additional 0.50% for non-customers.

In the past few years, credit cards have become the simplest way of spending money overseas. More than 33 million cards are in use in the UK and increasing numbers – two-thirds at the last count – take them abroad.

Cards are convenient. They don't involve having to carry large wads of cash around. Moreover, users are covered under the Consumer Credit Act. If your goods were faulty, the card provider is jointly liable, alongside the provider, and should reimburse the money, although in such cases it is important to keep the receipt.

Alongside legal protection, most credit card companies also offer bolt-on protection insurance, extendable to items bought outside the UK, and provide cover against damage or theft up to £1,000. Barclaycard users already have this cover.

Credit cards are also increasingly

popular for cash withdrawals from bank machines. Beware, though, that the cost of doing so is higher than making simple purchases and involves a 1.5 per cent handling fee, a foreign currency loading hidden within the exchange rate and no interest-free period. On the plus side, exchange rates should be better than those often available at foreign bureaux de change.

Debit cards, linked to a person's bank account, offer a similar means of obtaining cash or paying a bill. The system is run by Visa and MasterCard. There are a mass of network signs and symbols operating through both providers. The MasterCard network includes Cirrus, which allows cards to be used at hole-in-the-wall machines, and Maestro for purchases.

Visa uses the Plus logo for cash-points and Delta for purchases. Electron, another name used by Visa,

allows transactions to be debited to an account where it has enough funds.

Before setting off on holiday, check card expiry dates, the availability of outlets in that country and credit balances. Also, check whether the cards have the right logos enabling them to be used abroad. Card protection companies, such as CPP and Sentinel, have replacement and emergency cash facilities. Details of each are available from bank branches.

One new option from both Visa and American Express is the "holiday card", which travellers load with up to £5,000-£6,000 of spending money to withdraw from cashpoint machines. The Amex card is available for the US from Lunn Poly, Britannia and Woolwich building societies. Visa's card operates world-wide and comes through Thomas Cook, Bank of Scotland and Royal Bank of Scotland.

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Serena Mackesy
In my week

David's butts always have a little bit that's still alight. I always have to dip my finger in my drink and put a couple of drops on the end to extinguish it. He really hates this...

don't know how people manage to share their living space permanently. Even your best friend in the whole world ever has at least one habit that, if you had to witness it on a daily basis, would send you screaming for the breadknife after a decade.

With David, it's the ashtray thing. I know this is stupid, but for 14 years now he's been unable to leave my cigarette butts alone. I have a way of putting out my cigarettes which, to me, seems completely logical: knock the ember off the end, stub the butt a couple of times and drop it. This puts out the cigarette with minimum energy, maximum effectiveness.

What David then does is pick up my butt - and it's always the butt I've just put down, never any of the other available ones - and set about chasing the ember round the ashtray, breaking it up and tamping each glowy bit until it is ground to nothing. He does this with a slight show of sentimentality every time, a small glance in my direction, and it drives me to distraction.

I wouldn't mind so much if he a) didn't always, when unwrapping a new pack of cigarettes, insist on putting the cellophane in the ashtray, where it will catch alight and fill the room with black plastic fumes; and b) had ever in his life put one of his own cigarettes out effectively.

David's butts always have a little bit that's still alight and continues to smoke long after he's stopped doing so. I always have to dip my finger in my drink and put a couple of drops on the end to extinguish it. He really hates this. One day we will come to blows on the subject; in the meantime, I content myself with cracking my knuckles whenever he starts.

I'm cracking my knuckles

madly as we compare diaries about Malta. Behind me, two men with gold earrings are playing snooker. Behind David, a silent game of poker is in progress, 10p pieces clattering on the table, the odd round of grunted "thanks" as another trayful of bottled beer and red wine is shared out. David's pension adviser is at the table with us. God knows why, but he is, and I'm trying to keep my voice down as the place hasn't started filling up yet and everything we say rings out as though it's coming over a PA system.

"How about the Fifth?" says David, who is pulling a face as I take the top of my left thumb between right thumb and index finger and go clunk.

"Good thought. Um - oh, no. It's Pride that weekend."

"Ah. Were you going to go?"

"Not on the march. But I usually go up to the common. The boys will never forgive me if I don't."

"Why," says David, "do you always switch to hyperbole when you're talking about the lads?"

"Learned habit, darling."

Insurance man fondles his pint of lager. "Are you talking about Gay Pride?"

"Yes."

"Are you gay, then?"

"No."

He looks relieved. "I saw them marching last year," he says.

"Uh-huh?"

"Mmm." He smiles. "I've got nothing against gays," he says, and the hairs on the back of my neck prickle because you know that the phrase "I've got nothing against" is always followed by the word "but", especially when it's in a sentence that reduces a whole group of people to an adjective. A Gay. A Black. A Crazy.

"But," says insurance man, "I had to laugh. They

were going 'we're here, we're queer and we're not shopping'. Well, I had to laugh."

"Isn't that what you were supposed to do?"

"Well, no. I mean, they were on a march. They were taking themselves terribly seriously."

I wonder if he's ever heard of defusing aggression with comedy, but say nothing. The card school is all cards, glancing at me over David's shoulder. I try to change the subject.

They had this horrible ride last year. One of those wall of death things, only it turned upside-down once it got really fast.

"Wow," says David, "Did you go on it?"

"Not in the knickers I was wearing ..."

"And another thing," says insurance agent, "they were doing all this stuff like snogging in public. It was really gross. I'm not a homophobe, but ..."

The sound of snooker balls has died down as well. I pray for God to take me out of here. - if they want to get public sympathy they're not going the best way about it by offending people."

David is fiddling with the ashtray again. "I don't think they're trying to get sympathy. I think things like equal rights are higher on the agenda."

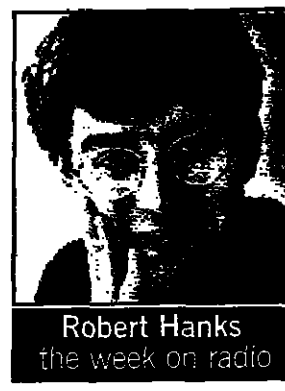
"Well, they didn't get my sympathy. And Christ, did you see the state of some of the girls? Built like mastiffs ..."

I lean forward and whisper. "Can you lower your voice? Please?"

"Ohh," he says. "I didn't realise you were so easily embarrassed." He drinks his beer, smiles nicely. "Like I say," he says, "I've nothing against them. I just don't think it's necessary to shove it down people's throats."

A voice rises from the card table. "He should be so lucky," it says.

You are entering virtual history



Robert Hanks
the week on radio

The airwaves are filled with hypothesis and contingency again: What if...? has returned (Radio 4, Sat), with Christopher Andrew tempting historians to consider, this week, what might have happened had Queen Victoria been born a male (lively keep your quips about Albert being in for a nasty shock to yourself, madam). Meanwhile, we're in for another dose of Ken Bruce's intermittently amusing counter-factual sketch series, *The What If Show* (Radio 2, Thurs). And sandwiched in between, we've just had the radio version of Robert Harris's *Fatherland* (Radio 4, Mon), set in Berlin in 1964, when Hitler rules Europe and the extermination of the Jews is a guilty secret.

All this uncertainty would usually leave me feeling jumpy - after all, the moving finger has done its dirty work and nothing is going to change: our views of reality are unfixed enough without throwing in any extra fantasy. The present fashion for "virtual history" - to borrow the title of a collection of counter-factual essays edited by the historian Niall

sive. John Dryden's production used a variety of locations more simply, just to add a subtle variety of acoustic textures, a sense of movement and change. At the same time, he plastered on layers of sound, without ever getting too noisy or fussy - plenty of background music, some of it a little corny, but giving the action a cinematic sweep; and radios playing in the background (if you listened carefully you could follow news reports of the Reich's battles with Ukrainian terrorists going on under the dialogue). Apart from anything else, this was a welcome compliment to the listener's intelligence, most of us being perfectly capable of absorbing information from two sources at once.

All this was helped by the acting - particularly Anton Lesser, his customary inwardness and compulsion making him ideal casting for the honest policeman Xavier March, whose investigations lead him to the heart of Germany's great secret.

More importantly than the fact that it created its own brand of history outstandingly well, though, was the way it highlighted aspects of real-

world history. On *Start the Week* (Radio 4, Mon), Robert Harris suggested that if Hitler had won the war there might have been a mythology of the gulags every bit as powerful as the myth of the Shoah is to us now. The idea was raised obliquely in the most powerful scene of *Fatherland* the play, when documents are discovered which detail the extermination of the Jews: names like Zyklon B, Majdanek, Sobibor and Auschwitz mean nothing in Harris's alternative Germany; and it's a prospect that's both idyllic and utterly terrifying. You could say that this is roughly what has happened with the gulags in the real world - how many of us can name a Soviet camp?

But you can't imagine the gulags conjuring up this particular nightmare: the horror of plans and schedules, feasibility studies and architect's drawings, docketed and filed away for reference. More convincingly than many documentaries, *Fatherland* brought home the special brand of awfulness displayed in the Shoah: the singleness of purpose in all that death.

Lies lead to honeymoon heaven



Jasper Rees
the week on television

No marriage is perfect, and nor is a new marital game show called *The Other Half* (BBC1, Sat). Like any marriage, its makers are going to have to work at it. Because if they don't, you wouldn't give it more than a couple of months. The fatal flaw in the design that might easily lead to an annulment is that the programme encourages the sort of behaviour that undermines matrimony. The more convincingly married couples lie and cheat, the better chance they have of winning the sort of holiday they would normally contemplate only for a honeymoon.

A couple is parked on a sofa by presenter Dale Winton, who then perches a spouse on a stool and invites the pair on the sofa to guess who, from a gallery of four members of the opposite sex, is their other half. To help them match spouse to spouse, Winton guides us round their house, grants three questions, and invites the parade of alleged spouses to plant the most authentically marital kiss on the cheek of their putative other half. If the sofa couple fail to match husband to wife, they're sent on their way while the couple they couldn't identify gets one step closer to a Caribbean holiday.

was a pair of perfectly normal black leggings. No doubt his wife stipulated that to put anything more compromising from her wardrobe on network TV would end the marriage.

While *The Other Half* is scarcely up the aisle, *Mastermind* (BBC1, Mon) is celebrating its silver jubilee, and yet still trying new things to keep that freshness. This week, a former sufferer answered questions on anorexia nervosa, which seemed perilously close to cheating because, like the contestants on *The Other Half*, she was answering questions about her own life. The autobiographical specialisation opens up interesting possibilities for the programme (or would do if it weren't about to fall on its sword). Your name? "Dale Winton." Your occupation? "Camp game-show host." And what is your chosen subject, Mr Winton? "Camp game-show hosts. Larry Grayson to Matthew Kelly."

Mastermind also fielded someone called Ivan Linner, who had been a contestant in the original series in 1972. He wore a black leather jacket, which went with the famous chair, and an apple green bow tie, which didn't. I don't know what his specialist subject was 25 years ago, but he didn't seem to know much about the Russian Revolution - Ivan or no Ivan. They didn't run to an old clip of him, because *Mastermind* is not that sort of programme. Its only concession to vulgarity is the reordering of the contestants for the general knowledge round to encourage an exciting finish. Thus the first-round leader went last, but made a terrible hash of her general knowledge and let the anorexic squeeze in front.

It was a lot more tense than the final of *Stars in their Eyes* (ITV, Sat), the vocation presented by Kelly which predictably brought out the sentimental in the telephone electorate. The prize went to the teenager from the Wirral impersonating Olivia Newton-John, whose lack of charisma has had off pat. Given that the youngest contender in the Tory leadership race is a dead cert, the suspicion is raised that the Conservative Party is just as sentimental. You can see the MPs' minds at work. "Let's vote for the kid who does such a brilliant impression of a doddery old patrician." The most up-to-the-minute question on *Mastermind* was "Who resigned as Paymaster General last year?" David "Two Brains" Willetts, that's who. He's one of Kenneth Clarke's henchmen. A rare case of someone in trivial pursuit getting on to *Mastermind*.

DAMIEN HURTS...and his painfully creative struggle



Whatever happened to John Stalker?

The Moment: You're nicked Son June 30, 1986: John Stalker, Manchester's deputy chief constable, is suspended from duty, amid hazy allegations linking him to "known criminals". Stalker, 47, has been on leave since the end of May, when he was taken off a two-year inquiry into allegations of a "shoot-to-kill" policy by the Royal Ulster Constabulary. By the end of the year, a CID probe clears him of misconduct - but not before his Ulster inquiry has been completed by another officer, and the Director of Public Prosecutions has cleared 11 RUC officers whose prosecution he had recommended. In disgust, he resigns.

The Background: Zero Tolerance Stalker had arrived in Ulster to investigate the deaths, in 1982, of six unarmed republicans, shot dead in three separate incidents by a special RUC unit in Co Armagh. He made it clear that he had not come to conduct a whitewash, and instigated a rigorous test of police and forensic procedure. Stalker's abrupt removal was explained by his friendship with Kevin Taylor, a businessman suspected of fraud and drug-dealing. Taylor's trial would eventually be halted by the judge, who accused the police of misleading tactics. Stalker's report was kept locked away, in "the national interest".

The Aftermath: you have the right to remain silent Stalker's findings have never been published. Three years ago, Belfast's senior coroner tried to subpoena his report for an inquiry into the deaths of the six men. Sir Hugh Annesley, RUC Chief Constable, refused to hand it over. And when Kevin Taylor sued the police for malicious prosecution and conspiracy, the government won a "gagging order", preventing Stalker from giving any detailed evidence at the trial.

The controversial docu-drama *Shoot to Kill* is the closest the public has come to finding out what happened in Armagh.

The Future: the citizen on patrol Whether or not the new government dares to publish his report, John Stalker himself hasn't suffered unduly: his income is said to have quadrupled since he quit the police. He has worked for industry as a "security consultant". His Central TV programme, *Crime Stalker*, hit the headlines in 1994 when a hoaxer phoned in saying his wife was baby Abbie Humphrey's kidnapper. He also writes about crime for the *Sun*. If he can keep his mouth shut about death squads, Stalker has a glittering future as a media darling.

Conal Walsh

WEATHER

The British Isles

General Situation and Outlook:

Scotland and Northern Ireland will have a rather cool day with a brisk northerly breeze. However, it should be mostly dry and fairly bright with a mix of clouds and sunny spells. The best of the sunshine is expected to be in the west, whereas further east there may be the odd light shower. England and Wales will start cloudy with a scattering of light showers. Midland and eastern counties will be grey with occasional rain, but the west is expected to brighten up.

Tomorrow, Scotland and Northern Ireland will cloud over after a sunny start, but it should stay dry away from the far north-west. England and Wales will be on the cool side with banks of cloud and a few sunny spells, but any showers will be light and scattered. On Monday there will be one or two light showers and a good deal of cloud, but it should be essentially dry. During Tuesday and Wednesday the weather is expected to become more unsettled again.

Lighting up Times

Today	Tomorrow
Aberdeen c 15 59	Carlisle c 15 59
London c 12 54	Cork c 15 59
Cardiff c 15 59	Dover c 15 59
Edinburgh c 13 55	Exeter c 15 59
Birmingham sh 17 63	Glasgow c 15 59
Blackpool c 13 55	Guernsey c 15 59
Bournemouth c 17 63	Inverness c 15 59
Bristol c 18 64	Isle of Man c 15 59
Cardiff c 15 59	Isle of Wight c 15 59

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Bristol c 18 64	Isle of Man c 15 59
Cardiff c 15 59	Isle of Wight c 15 59

Europe and The World

WORLD WEATHER YESTERDAY, MIDDAY (GMT): cloudy (cl), fog (fg), haze (hz), mist (mi), rain (r), snow (s), sunny (su), thunder (th), other (o), previous day's figure at local time.

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Other
Athens	29 84	12 54	100	
Auckland	14 57	12 54	100	
Bombay	31 88	12 54	100	
Bangkok	31 88	12 54	100	
Beirut	27 81	12 54	100	
Berlin	22 72	12 54	100	
Bombay	31 88	12 54	100	
Brussels	21 70	12 54	100	
Budapest	25 77	12 54	100	
Calcutta	30 86	12 54	100	
Cape Town	18 64	12 54	100	
Casablanca	23 73	12 54	100	
Christchurch	9 48	12 54	100	
Copenhagen	17 63	12 54	100	
Corfu	28 82	12 54	100	
Darwin	31 88	12 54	100	
Dhaka	31 88	12 54	100	
Hong Kong	27 81	12 54	100	
Istanbul	22 72	12 54	100	
Jerusalem	24 75	12 54	100	
Jo'burg	10 50	12 54	100	
K. Lumpur	33 91	12 54	100	
Lisbon	22 72	12 54	100	
Los Angeles	19 66	12 54	100	
Madrid	27 81	12 54	100	
Manila	26 79	12 54	100	
Malaya	35 95	12 54	100	
Malta	35 95	12 54	100	
Melbourne	14 57	12 54	100	
Montreal	26 79	12 54	100	
Moscow	25 77	12 54	100	
Munich	20 68	12 54	100	
New York	31 88	12 54	100	
Nice	24 75	12 54	100	
Nicosia	27 81	12 54	100	
Paris	21 70	12 54	100	
Prague	25 77	12 54	100	
Reykjavik	10 50	12 54	100	
Rio de Jan	22 72	12 54	100	
Rome	25 77	12 54	100	
Sydney	22 72	12 54	100	
Tenerife	25 77	12 54	100	
Tokyo	25 77	12 54	100	
Venice	25 77	12 54	100	
Vienna	22 72	12 54	100	
Warsaw	25 77	12 54	100	
Washington	27 81	12 54	100	
Wellington	11 52	12 54	100	

AA Roadwatch

Survey, M25 J8-10. Various restrictions and lane closures both ways between Reigate and the A3 as major widening work continues.

Bristol, M5 J18-19. Contrailow in operation across the Avonmouth Bridge with a 50mph speed limit. Regular rush-hour delays.

West Yorkshire, M1 J47. Major long-term roadworks continue around the Leeds junction with lane and speed restrictions. Expect delay on the M1, M62 and Dewsbury Road (until 15th September).

East Yorkshire, M62 J37-38. Reduced to one lane both ways, between Howden and North cave for major works. A Stoops speed limit is also in place. Expect delays until July.

Oxfordshire, M40 J8-9. Between Watlington and Oxford. Roadworks work. Drivers heading to J8 of the M40 for Oxford are advised to use the A40 and the A418 as alternatives.

Striding, M9 J10. Striding Lane closures both ways until further notice.

Staffordshire, A50 Stoke on Trent. Major construction work at Meix.

Out and about with AA Roadwatch call 0800 400 400 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per minute at all times (inc VAT).

Sun and Moon

Sun rises 4:43am
Sun sets 8:13pm
Moon rises 2:13pm
Moon sets 1:37am

Full Moon 20 June

The Sky at Night

Ophiuchus and Serpens are lower over the southerly horizon during the short nights of June. This view is for 11pm BST on 14 June.

Ophiuchus, the Serpent Bearer, stands in the southern mid-summer sky with his leg firmly wedged between Scorpius and Sagittarius. Under the current astronomical definition of the constellations, Ophiuchus is the 13th constellation, over and above the 12 of the tradition zodiac, through which the Sun passes on its yearly journey against the starry background. Ophiuchus is sometimes identified with the mythological healer Asclepius, son of Apollo, to whom serpents were sacred. The celestial Serpent truly entwines Ophiuchus. Though Serpens is considered just one constellation, it has the unique distinction of being in two parts - the "head" (Caput) and the "tail" (Cauda) - on either side of Ophiuchus. Serpens Caput contains a fine globular star cluster, M5, surpassed only by M13 in Hercules in northern skies. On the borderline of naked-eye visibility in a very dark sky, M5 is an easy object for binocular observers.

Jacqueline Mitton

Tina Ogle recommends **Dalziel and Pascoe** Sat 8.05pm BBC1

his seminal quiz *Try For Ten*, and his ground-breaking chat show *Look Who's Talking*. Those who caught them can't help but realise the huge debt we owe Derek. Mr Batey, wherever you are, take a bow.

You can't imagine the couple from this week's *Screen Two: Butterfly Kiss* (Sat BBC2) doing too well on either Dale or Derek's shows. "So Mitiam, you're getting ready for bed. What's the very last thing your partner takes off before joining you under the duvet?" "Well Derek, that would have to be her bondage chains." A supremely depressing road movie about a disturbed, serial-killing lesbian (Amanda Plummer) and the gormless goody two-shoes she picks up (Saskia Reeves), this is scripted by former *Coronation Street* and *Brookside* writer Frank Cottrell Boyce. If you tire of counting up the bludgeoned victims, you could always play spot the span star. Penny and Mandi from

Emmerdale, Bobby Grant from *Brookside* and the kid from *Corrie* who belonged to Des's ex-girlfriend are just some of the familiar faces keeping popular company. Released cinematically a couple of years back, this was dubbed at the time a British *Thelma and Louise*. But whereas their American counterparts were entirely sympathetic good gals pressured into crime by events beyond their control, these two are losers you are hard pressed to understand. Probably the point, but it makes for difficult and unrewarding viewing.

A far more mainstream affair is a new series of Dalziel and Pascoe (Sat BBC1), based on Reginald Hill's hugely popular novels. *Aficionados* of the books complain that the monstrous, ball-scratching, politically off-the-map Dalziel has been watered down way too much. But Warren Clarke, that monolith of barely suppressed menace, still lends buckle-loads of crassness to his

chief inspector. Tonight, his beautifully understated sidelick, played by Colin Buchanan, stumbles upon the recently deceased bodies of three of his friends. Meanwhile, Dalziel is crashing down the trail of the Wetherston micturator, an antiques thief with a penchant for urinating in his victims' kettles. A screenplay by Malcolm Bradbury manages to negotiate the chalk-and-cheese coppers through standard plots in an elegant fashion.

You can't tell but wonder how this pair would fare as detectives in *Homicides: Life on the Street* (Sat 4). Dalziel would probably see it as his duty as a Yorkshireman to pour cold water on the mundane yet existential ramblings of his colleagues. But Pascoe, sensitive New Man that he is, could easily partner Bayliss. You can just see him discussing the relative merits of Yorkshire ale and American domestic beer, all the while Yorkshire's next-door neighbor suspect with his glacial stops.

ITV/Regions

MELBIA
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (824443). 1.05 Anglo News (3668882). 2.05 (45517433). 1.10 Central (6739462). 2.10 Films: The Intelligence Men (289286) and seaQuest USV (6502172). 5.05 Anglo News and seaQuest USV (6502172). 5.10 World of Wonder (8652627). 3.35 Jobfinder (8558592). 5.20 - 5.30 Asian Eye (3454641).

RHYMLES
As London except: 12.30pm Movies (45517433). Videos (824443). 1.05 ITV News (45517433). 2.10 Films: The Towering Inferno (67829174). 5.05 ITV Wales News and Sports Results (86559714). 5.15 D.I.C. nosours (7312917).
WTV
As London except: 12.30pm Movies (45517433). 2.10 The Monster Squad (85979283). 4.30 - 5.00 Asian Eye (3454641).

HIT WEST
As HIT Wales except: 1.10pm The Jailed Volume One - Issue Four (2320511). 1.45 seaQuest USV one - Issue Four (2320511). All for Mary (96559174). 4.15 The List (11503578). 5.05 - 5.15 pm HIT West News and Weather (8655714).

MERIDIAN
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (824443). 1.05 Meridian News and Weather (23137269). 1.40 The Road Show (31225511). 2.10 Films: Bionic Showdown (265608). 3.50 seaQuest USV (8594153). 5.05 Meridian News and Weather (85979283). 5.15 D.I.C. nosours (7312917).
MONSTER SQUAD
As London except: 12.30pm Movies (45517433). 2.10 The Monster Squad (1957405). 3.40 Helter Skelter (85979283). 4.30 - 5.00 Asian Eye (3454641).

WESTCOUNTRY
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (824443). 1.05 Westcountry News and Weather (831207). 2.10 Film: The Fifth Element (23137269). 1.40 Film: That Dam Cat (5334489). 3.55 seaQuest USV (8502172). 5.05 Westcountry News (3589917). 12.25 Films: Vengeance (154318). 2.15 Film: Helter Skelter (85979283). 4.30 - 5.00 Asian Eye (3454641).

YORKSHIRE
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (824443). 1.05 Calendar News and Weather (45517433). 1.10 Central (3668882). 2.05 (45517433). 1.10 Yorkshire TV (3454641). 3.55 Agent Inc (297207). 3.55 seaQuest USV (8502172). 5.05 Calendar News and Weather (7933191). 5.10 Soranline (8652627). 12.25 Weshop Home Shopping Advertising Magazine (85979283). 1.05 Yorkshire TV (3454641). 1.10 Yorkshire TV (4815000). 3.00 In Bed with Medinair (14552318). 3.25 Couch (4551825). 3.50 Funny Business (5861275). 4.15 Collins and Mason (6556282). 4.45 - 5.30 Murderer, Sex Writer (6556282).

CHANNEL 3 NORTH EAST
As Yorkshire except: 1.05pm North East News (455114733). 5.05 North East News (7933191). 5.10 - 5.20pm Cartoon Time (8652627).

S4C
S4C except: 10.00am Home Improvement (745511). 10.30 The Mordans (62191). 12.00 The Mordans (62191). 6.30 Spanglo (375). 7.00 Newyddion A Chlawrwn (113240). 7.15 Y Wladwrddw (78917). 8.15 Dym Deud. Syr Charles Evans (655424). 2.45 Short and Curtes (315111). 10.00 Hearts and Minds (375). 10.00 Film: Conquering Paradise (14552318). 11.45 Film: The Horseman's Life on the Steppe (1045511).



Satellite/cable

SAT MOVIES GOLD

6.00pm Big Bad Jim McLain (23024627)
8.00pm Backstage (66895787), 10.00m
Movie Madness (66895789), 12.00m
The 1-2-3's From Rome
(23592738) 1.15m Can't Stop the
Music (4894844), 4.00-6.00am
Born Yesterday (4729349).

SAT SPORTS 1

7.00am World Sports (946677), 7.30
Powerboat and Jet Ski Race (62021)
Exterior Shot (926767), 8.30
Racing News (121177), 9.00m Super
League (665998), 11.00m Super
League (73269), 11.30 Snare (77939)
12.00 Football (G0285), 2.00 The
Lions on Tour (655377), 5.00 Water
World (655377), 6.00 Super League
(92888), 8.00 The 1-2-3's From Rome
(91801), 9.30 Speedway (249578),
12.00 Snare (41660), 12.30 World
Sports (27793), 1.00-3.30 Spanish
Football (91554), 5.00-7.30am
Super League (46833).

SAT SPORTS 2

7.00am Super League (9757733), 7.30
Sports Centre (9736240), 8.00
Success Arm (450559), 11.00 End
Zone (8752288), 12.00 Australian
Rules Football (8931608), 2.00
Motor Sport (7048949), 5.00
WWE Smackdown! (519442), 6.00
WWF (4184424), 9.30 Spanish
Football (750068), 11.30 Sports
Unlimited (2185269), 12.30-
1.00am Extreme (806134).

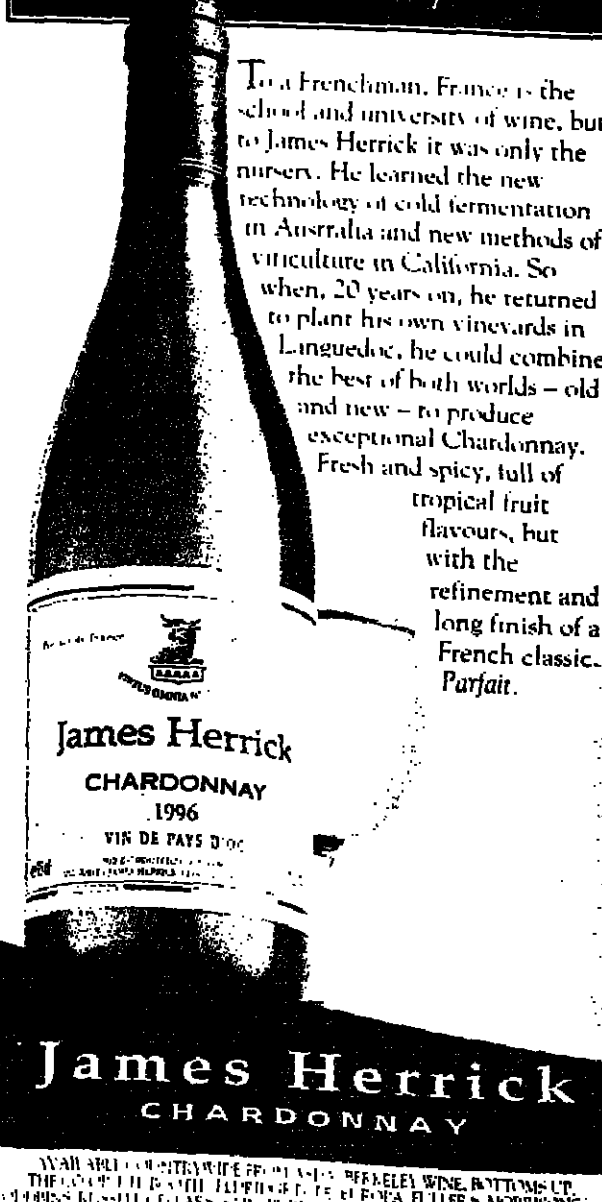
SAT SPORTS 3

12.00noon Call: US Open
(72674177), 3.00 End Zone:
(9463153), 4.00 Extreme
(4129837), 4.30 Trade the PGA
(519442), 5.00 Call: US Open
(92002788), 12.30-1.00am
Survival of the Fittest (9285657)

LIVE TV

5.00am Pm Money 7.00 Fashion
7.30 Sport 8.00 A Game of Two
Scavens 8.30 Sham Rock Quiz 8.45
Looking for Love 9.00 Pet Squad
9.30 Revelations 10.00 Fashion
10.30 Agency 10.45 Looking for Love
11.00 Pet Squad 11.30 Thrill Tv
Fashion and Fortune 12.30 Why
Files? 1.00 Agency 1.30 Fashion
2.30 Fashion 3.00 Agency 3.30 Fate
and Fortune 4.00 Pm Money 4.30
Sport 5.00 Sham Rock Quiz 5.30
Agency 6.00 Fashion 6.30 Sport
7.00 Pm Money 7.30 A Game of
Two Scavens 8.00 Bushido 8.30
Handy Handy, Sham Rock Quiz 9.30
Agency 10.00 Pm Show 10.00
Popstar Darts, Sport 10.30 Agency
11.00 Topless Girls, Fate and Fortune
11.30 Topless Girls, 12.00 Handy
Handy, Exotic Erotica 12.30 Kiss
TV 1.30 Home shopping 2.00

Australian savoir faire.
Californian je ne sais quoi.
The perfect French
Chardonnay

[illegible]